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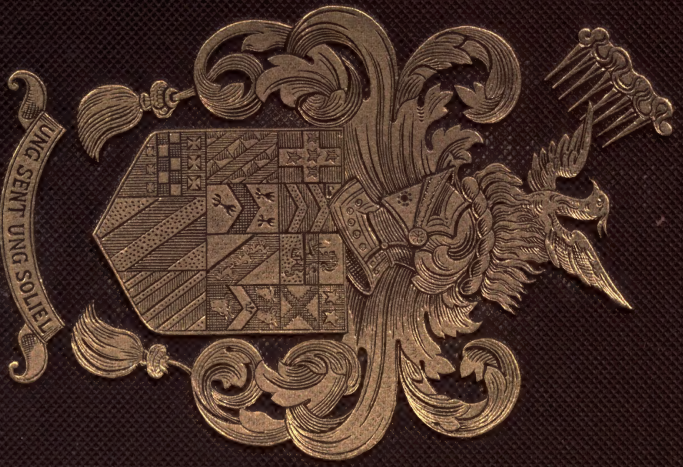

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MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY

VOL. IV.

Walker & Boutall ph.sc

Sir Ralph Verney Baronet.
from a painting by Sir P. Lely
at Claydon House.

Raphe Verney

MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY

FROM THE

RESTORATION TO THE REVOLUTION

1660 TO 1696

COMPILED FROM THE LETTERS AND ILLUSTRATED BY
THE PORTRAITS AT CLAYDON HOUSE BY

MARGARET M. VERNEY

'Oblivion may not cover
All treasures hoarded by the miser, Time'

BLACKNALL MONUMENT AT ABINGDON

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VOL. IV

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

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PREFACE

TO

THE FOURTH VOLUME

THIS concluding volume of the 'Verney Memoirs' carries the reader from the Restoration to the reign of William and Mary, and the year 1696, when Sir Ralph Verney is gathered to his fathers.

The letters are so numerous during these thirty-six years, that many topics of interest they contain have been left untouched; all that could be aimed at was (as a modern philosopher puts it) to present 'these interminable mile-post piles of matter, in essence, in chosen samples, digestibly.'

My thanks are due to the Rev. Llewellyn J. Kenyon Stow, Vicar of Steeple Claydon, for his help and encouragement throughout this task; to the Rev. Herbert E. D. Blakiston, Senior Tutor of Trinity College, Oxford, for the trouble he has taken, with his special knowledge, to elucidate the correspondence of the undergraduate at Trinity, in the reign of James II.; to Miss Butterfield for kind permission to use the Rev. W. Butterfield's journal in her possession; and to other friends and correspondents.

In tracing the family history, Sir Ralph Verney is still the central figure round which all the others are grouped. His lifelong friend, Sir Roger Burgoyne, has drawn this portrait of him in his sixtieth year: 'However you come by it, you have the quickest intelligence of any man I know. . . . You are now become, I think, the Generall Trustee of all that know you. Your Charity, Piety, & Friendship, though it bringe much outward trouble, yet I am confident it is attended with a great deal of inward contentment; it is so naturall to you soe to do kindnesses to your friends, that I beleeve the pleasure they have in the favours they receive, cannot exceed that you take yourself in those you give.'

His Puritanism was so graciously compounded, that it was to him his grandchildren and their friends appealed if a wild young spark was to be got out of a scrape that threatened the gallows, or a damsel, gentle or simple, was disappointed in love. 'Tell me not of y^{r} age,' writes his favourite sister when he was already an elderly man, 'for I am resolved to think you but 40 years old this twenty years, if I live so long, for more than that I would not have you, so long as I live, but whatever your age is, I thank God y^{r} infirmities are not so many as most young men have.'

In more settled times the veteran Parliament-

man might have been content with his useful and happy home-life, but the growing encroachments of the Crown brought him once more to the front; he took an active share in the elections of 1681 and '85, when he was twice returned for the Borough of Buckingham in opposition to the Government. Strong Protestant as he was, his sympathies were entirely with James II. against Monmouth, and it required all the injudicious acts of that misguided monarch to alienate Sir Ralph completely, and to make him rejoice in the accession of William and Mary. He was a member of the Convention Parliament in old age, which consolidated the work the Long Parliament of his youth had begun.

'The subject is but dull in itself,' says Fuller, 'to tell the time & place of men's births & deaths, their names, etc. & therefore this bare skeleton of *Time, Place & Person* must be fleshed with some pleasant passages . . . that so the Reader if he do not arise . . . with more Piety or Learning, at least he may depart with more pleasure & lawful delight.'

MARGARET M. VERNEY.

CLAYDON HOUSE, WINSLOW:
October 20, 1898.

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MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY

FROM

THE RESTORATION TO THE REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I.

THE WOOING OF MARY ABELL.

1660–1662.

A blithe and bonny country lass,
  Heigh-ho, the bonny lass:
Sat sighing on the tender grass
  And weeping said, 'Will none come woo me?'

While England was enduring 'the miseries of a Civil War, and the many and fruitless attempts towards Settlements, upon imaginary Forms of Government,' a Royalist merchant, William Abell, left the City of London, bought the manor of East Claydon, with the White House, and tried to bury himself in the safe obscurity of the life of a country squire. He bore a name which was unpleasantly notorious. William Abell the elder, Master of the Vintners' Company, had been the King's tool in his illegal attempts to tax the City Companies, and to escape the jibes and

caricatures showered upon him in London, during the Protectorate, he fled to Holland.

Before the troubles, his son had married 'Anne, daughter of John Wakering and Mary Palmer his wife,' of an old family of small landowners, at Kelverton, in Essex. Their eldest child, Mary Abell, was born there, 'on the 5th of April 1641, between 6 and 7 at night,' and was baptized on the 17th; the next year a son, Thomas, was born on the 18th of May, baptized in Kelvedon Church on the 29th, and buried there on the 30th of August. Anne Abell survived her boy but a few months, 'she dyed 22nd January 1643, and was buried in St. Peter's Church in St. Albans.' The widower settled down on his newly acquired property, and here his little daughter grew up, the pride of the village, and the darling of her quiet home, but far removed from whatever advantages town breeding and good society could bestow.

East Claydon would, however, have repudiated with scorn any idea of remoteness or rusticity. Was it not known to all the world that the high-road from London to Buckingham passed through it, and that the London coach stopped to bait at Squire Abell's substantial Village Inn, where a fine wainscoted parlour received the passengers who might wish to taste the excellent home-brewed ale? Plaistow, too, the London carrier, had his abode here; and the Church books showed an admixture of outside influences, unknown to the retired parish of Middle

Claydon. In 1641, there was quite a sensational entry of the death and burial of Mercy Hawkins of Greetworth in the County of Northampton, 'a passenger from London.'[1]

The White House was then 'a handsome dwelling, with numerous gables, heavy stacks of chimneys, mullioned windows and piers surmounted with stone balls.' It has now shrunk to smaller proportions, but the beautiful Jacobean porch still remains, with a recess beside it, containing a shelf meant perhaps for a hive. The small mullioned bow-window of Mary's parlour, built up in the intervening century, has recently been brought to light. The ornamental brick work of the garden wall, and the clipped box hedges retain a respectable flavour of antiquity.

William Abell the widower kept up his friendship with his wife's family, who were usefully connected with the Protector's Government; her brother, Dionysius Wakering, married Anne Everard, daughter of an Essex Baronet, and their only surviving child, Mary, married Oliver St. John's son. Aunt Wakering, who appears as a widow during Mary's girlhood,

[1] At a time when some half-dozen Christian names sufficed for all the boys and girls, gentle and simple, of the neighbourhood, the variety in East Claydon is quite remarkable. With the Puritan taste for Bible names—Noah, Ezra, Jonas, Josias, Judith, Deborah, Lydia, Susannah and the like, the older names have kept their ground, and Christopher, Michael, Benedict, Agnes, Audrey, Christian (as a girl's name), Constance, Dorothy, Elinor, Ursula, Priscilla, and Petronilla are amongst the names of the village children. The Welsh element represented by Ellis, Hugh, Pierce and Winifred, may, perhaps, be traced to the Vicar's household, whose signature, Maurice Gryffyth, leaves no doubt as to his own nationality.

seems to have married late in life Cromwell's General, Desborough.

While Mary was still a child, William Abell returned to Essex for a wife, Mary, whose family is not known to us; she was related to the Wakerings through the Wisemans, a connection difficult to trace, as there were three Essex Baronets of the name of Wiseman in the time of the Stuarts; the Verneys were connected with them through Sir Ralph's wife.[1]

The second Mrs. Abell proved an excellent step-mother, and Mary was tenderly attached to her. Squire Abell's property adjoined Sir Ralph Verney's in two parishes, and their dwelling-houses were scarce two miles apart, but with such widely different opinions and antecedents there was some instinctive dislike and rivalry between them. The boundary hedges and ditches afforded the usual subjects of dispute between country neighbours; and when Mr. Abell's cattle and sheep broke through some neglected gap and were promptly put in the pound, Sir Ralph took it that Mr. Abell 'intended to quarrel,

[1] To complicate matters still further, Mary, the second Mrs. Abell, must have married a Wiseman after her first husband's death, for when standing sponsor to her step-daughter's child in February 1666, she is described as 'the Lady Wiseman, wife of Sir Richard Wiseman and relict of William Abell;' in September 1667, she writes to her step-daughter from Woodham-Walter, signing herself 'Mary Fytche,' and the latter replies telling her of the death of Wm. Meade, the Parish Clerk, and others of her acquaintance in East Claydon; Mrs. Fytche is said (November 27, 1667) to be staying at the house of her brother [in law ?] Sir Wm. Wiseman, and to be adopting one of her late husband's sons; she seems therefore to have lost two husbands and married a third within seven years.

and that he must order his affairs accordingly.' Edmund Verney was probably the only young man in the Claydons who knew nothing of the gentle maiden who was his nearest neighbour. When the Restoration was imminent, and it became profitable to furbish up the rusty memory of a Royalist ancestor, William Abell emerged from his retirement, with an enthusiasm of obsequious loyalty, which the old Bucks squires looked upon as officious and absurd. 'Mr. Abell's Collection for the poore King, and the various aspects and humours seen upon his Majesty's proclayminge' at East Claydon were among the jokes of the county. 'Mr. Abell read the King's letter and declaration to his neighbours after church,' writes Mr. Butterfield, 'and haveing shewed them what a gratious King they had, he moves them to see what they would do for him; and to begin lays downe 9*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* which was his owne proportion of the mounthly taxe, and soe desires the like of them all rich and poore. . . . 25*l.* was gathered, and to Aylesbury he and some other of his Neighbours carryed it, where they would have payed it to the Treasurer, but he would none of it, as haveing no order to receive it; then at the Petty Sessions he sends to the Justices to acquaint them of the money; they made themselves merry at it, but would not take the money. So I heare he has now come up to London it may be to meet his Majesty and acquaint him with his doeings, for he told his neighbours the King should know of their forwardness. . . . Mr.

May 21, 1660

Townshend [Rector of Radclive] told me I should see this would be expected from us all. I laughed at him and made him angry. Sure that man is also strangely transported with this new change, he talks, and preaches and does wondrously.'

No Stuart King ever frowned upon a worshipper who offered up the incense of hard cash; and we find William Abell in October, '60, as a Captain of Foot, among the gentlemen of the County of Bucks, named to command the Trained Bands, and advanced in due time to further honours.

Sir Ralph and his son spent that gay summer of 1660 in town, Mun is studying 'the elements of Civil Law, but has reached,' he confesses, 'no great height of knowledge therein.' 'The Merry Monarch' was receiving a welcome frantic in its enthusiasm. Everybody who aspired to be anybody expected office at Court, though there were not nearly places enough to go round. Colonel Henry Verney applied for the post of a gentleman-in-waiting, backed up by 'my Lady Peto, Lady Onion, and Sir Harry Newton.' Edmund desired 'a troop' and a 'red ribbon' of the Bath. 'The King,' he writes, 'intends to be crowned the first Thursday after Candlemasse Day, unlesse the Duke of Glocester's death deferre it . . . but I thinke Princes doe not usually mourn so long.' 'Sir Richard Temple, and a yong ladd of a very greate estate and of my name, one Greville Verney,'[1] are to be among the new knights; 'the way had been

[1] An ancestor of Lord Willoughby de Broke, of Compton Verney.

only to acquaint my Lord Manchester that such a gentleman had a desire to be knight of the Bath, and to give in his name, which he is obliged to present to the King, who denies no man who will be at the charges.'[1] Even Heron, Edmund's servant, 'a good sightly fellow, who writes well and is in all respects fit to serve any gentleman,' is inclined to pick a quarrel with his master, that he may be free to seek 'a place at court,' or at worst as 'a comedian' in one of the reopened theatres. 'To quit your service to turn Player,' writes Sir Ralph to Mun, 'will be for neither of your credits. . . . Players and Fiddlers are treated with ignominy by our lawes, and truly I should be sorry to see him in such debased company.'

Dr. Denton alone gets more than he wants. 'A feather in my capp,' he writes, 'a warrant to be sworne in ordinary with a Reserve of my Priority and Seniority, but what to do with it now I have it, I doe not know. I shall make noe hast to be sworne . . . . amonge other Inconveniencies I doubt swearinge may ingage me to ride at the Coronation, and I have noe great man to squander away 100*l*. . . . Dr. Bate and Dr. Manton have refused theire Deaneries.' Jan. 17, 1661

Mun's friend Dr. Thomas Hyde succeeds Dr. Zouch at the Admiralty. More business came upon Sir Ralph than ever; his friends who had served 'the March, 1661

[1] The expenses are not given in detail, but the following year (June 5, 1662) the fees for Sir William Ayscough's knighthood amounted to 60*l*. 10*s*.; a baronetcy was said to cost 900*l*.

late Usurpers of Government,' were much persecuted by 'malitious persons;' there were pardons to be procured, suits pending before the House of Lords 'and Lords are teadious persons to waite on;' threadbare Royalists like 'Mr. Kenelm Digby to be certified as being Loyal and Indigent,' and, as Deputy Lieutenant, Sir Ralph was constantly receiving proclamations about the raising of the Militia, the prosecution of 'Anabaptists, Quakers, Fifth Monarchy Men, and other Fanaticks,' and the dispersing of their meetings.

Jan. 18, 1661 There is a long correspondence with Cousin Thomas Stafford about the meeting of the Trained Bands at Winslow, where his son, Captain Edmund Stafford, is to be in command. He has 'my Ld. Leift^t^'s Commission with some instructions,' but there are only 14 pikes and he needs that 'the Collours, Leading Staffe, Partizans, Halberts, Musketts & Drums should be ready, that he may be in an equipage to march, trayne & exercise his company, according to the moderne discipline of warr.' The

Jan. 30, 1661 County is also raising a 'Volunteer Troop of Horse' to meet at Aylesbury. Sir Wm. Smith 'exceedingly approves the designe' and will send a horse or two; he is unable to appear in person, being summoned 'by my Lord Treasurer to wait upon him, about some affairs of His Majesty's.'

Sir Ralph was no courtier, but he began to consider whether some of the patents granted to Sir Edmund could be revived, and whether his office of

Knight Marshal might not be fittingly bestowed on his son; rough drafts of petitions were drawn up in which a good deal was said about his father's heroic death, and his own exile and his decimation, which would have touched the Standard Bearer's sense of humour.

Charles II., more anxious, as the Royalists complained, to conciliate an opponent than to reward a friend, made Sir Ralph Verney a Baronet. Mun speaks of 'this Age of Universall concessions,' and affirms that the 'Revolution hath changed the face of the whole Nation which was heavy and discontented into cheerfulnesse & joy.' 'Mercye soe generally rules the land, that Traytors themselves are preferred to their desires.'

March 16, 1661

Feb. 11, 1661

'The happy change that wee have lately had in England, makes us now begin to plant again,' writes Sir Ralph to Monsieur Pappin at Blois, 'in hopes that we, or our children, may reape the frute in peace, under our good & gracious King, whose vertues are more honour to him, then his Crownes, & whose zeal & constancy in religion, are like to make him the Head & Protector of all the Reformed churches in Europe;' and on the strength of these conclusions Sir Ralph begs his friend to send him a large consignment of vines of the early ripe Auvergnac grape.

The King rode from the Tower to Whitehall the day before his Coronation; a devout Royalist lady [1]

[1] Diary of Anne Murray, Lady Halkett: *Camden Soc.*, 1875, p. 114.

who had known him from boyhood watched his progress with breathless interest, imputing to him the pious thoughts that filled her own mind. 'Such was the multitude of beholders,' she writes, 'that crowded aboutt the horse on which his Majestie did ride, that his servants were not able to keepe aboutt him, very many meane ordinary persons layd their hands upon the horse & the rich trapings, which put me in terror of some attempt on his Majestie's person. . . . Butt while I was thus conflecting with my feares the King rode on with a serene undisturbed composure, free either from feare or vanity, and seemed to be pleased with the liberty the rude multitude tooke to approach him.' Sir Ralph and Mun witnessed the Coronation in Westminster Abbey. Dr. Morley, whom we last met poking about the old bookstalls at the Hague, bemoaning the triumphs of anarchy and schism, was now preaching the Coronation sermon in full canonicals as Bishop of Worcester; poor starved Dr. Cosins had become Prince Bishop of Durham; and Sir Frederick Cornwallis, who shared Sir Ralph's imprisonment at Whitehall, was conspicuous as Treasurer of the Household. While old friends met again in so splendid a scene, there seemed, in the excitement of the moment, no room for any feelings but those of mutual congratulation. 'Did I not know you very well,' writes Sir Ralph to Doll, 'I should think you little less than a Phanaticke, for being absent at this great solemnitie.' 'No pen nor

April 23, 1661

ink can express the gallantry of the nobility,' writes another eye-witness, 'who are today in their Parliament robes, I would have enlarged but we are so busie with looking att bonfiers and fireworkes.'[1]

Luce Sheppard is now installed at Burleigh, where 'the littell ladie thrives well under her tuition,' my Lord of Exeter has a dispensation from his Majesty, which relieves him of attendance at the Coronation much to Luce's disappointment. Mun's account of it to his old friend is more affectionate than instructive. 'Mrs. Shepard,' he begins, 'your verball expressions were most welcome to me, in truth it is impossible any thing from you can be otherwise. Had your affairs allowed me the happiness of Personall attendance on you at the coronation, the joy of the day had been mightilye improved. The solemnitye and lustre thereof you have seene from a pen more certeyne and polite than myne can bee; yet I must say againe, I missed you there.'

'Sweet Cossen,' writes Doll Leeke, 'I beleve you came to towne to se all the bravery, and truly by the relation of it, it was worth your time. . . I se you have don better for your sonn, then he was abell to do for him self, he is no knight of the Bath, which he did not question to get, but you have given him somthing which will advantag his family for ever. . . . You se I am not to be temted with fine sights to come to Loundon; the truth is I spent all my mouney when I was ther, and must take a longer

[1] Fleming MSS., 442, *Hist. MSS. Comm.*

time to recrut. All that bravery wold have made me malincoly, I am much finer in my ould clothes in the Country, then I should have been ther. Your coronation sute will serve us, ther fore pray come to Croshall.'

April 29, 1661

Sir Ralph claims 20*l.* from his son 'for killing my Black bald Nagg; with much difficulty hee came home, but in such a case as . . . never poore beast was worse. There fell a humour into his hinder legg, which swelled it as bigg as your Wast, and in a short time it gangren'd, and became cold and Rotten, soe he is now devided amongst my Carpes.' Edmund denies that he had over-ridden the nag, 'mais la pauvre beste N'avoit gueres envie de marcher, et certes je ne le pouvois blamer, car sans doute il cognoissoit par clarté de Nature, que chasque pas qu'il alloit (quoyque fort petit) le hastoit aux Ombres eternels.'

Meanwhile the heiress-hunting for Mun continues. After Mary Eure's final rejection, Mun himself had relapsed into his old indifference. Sir Ralph and Aunt Isham were still in pursuit of 'Mr. Bacchus' daughter and heiress who reappears as 'the widow of a Mr. Bishop.' Anne Hobart had her own widow to recommend, Sir Edward Alstone's daughter, who had just thrown Lord Paget over, and was in treaty against her father's wishes with 'the son of Lord Coleraine.' Sir Edward Alstone preferred the Verney alliance, and was conferring with Dr. Denton, and so the dreary comedy dragged on.

Walker & Boutall ph. sc.

Queen Catherine of Braganza
from a painting at Claydon House.

My Lord Sandwich's fleet was starting for Lisbon, and Edmund writes: 'J'ai grandissime envie d'aller en Portugall pour faire part du train de nostre Reyne qui sera.' 'As for your Portugal voyage,' Sir Ralph replies, '(whither it seemes you have a greate desire to Ramble,) I looke uppon it as a Fantasticall Dreame. Can you bee soe sencelesse as to thinke that Portugall is your way to Wooe the Widdow? Beeleeve me Mun, the Widdow must bee your Quene, and tis well if you can get her with all the freindes and industry you have.' May 11, 1661

Edmund hears that the Portuguese have been defeated by the Spaniards. 'Si cela est, je crois que notre pays ne manquera pas tant qu'il a fait de Rois ni de Reynes, car la Reyne de Boheme est deja arrivee comme si c'était pour montrer le chemin au reste.' May 21, 1661

Doll Leeke contributes her mite of evidence as to the good impression Catherine of Braganza made on her arrival. 'My sister says the queen is very hansom, and I hear very stricte in hir carage, and all that is with hir modest and reserved. I hope it will work upon some of our wild ladys to make them more grave.' The picture at Claydon does not bear out Anne Hobart's charitable opinion of the Queen's good looks. Her expression is sensible and gentle, but the features are heavy and commonplace. Her hair, which in her earlier portraits is massed on the top of her head not unbecomingly, is dressed in 'the French mode,' and sticks out in a way to recall May 21, 1662

her bridegroom's uncourteous speech. 'You have brought me a bat.'

Edmund's own love-making did not prosper; his Widow is 'in a cooling condition,' and his 'late letters have seemed much unconcerned, and rather doubtfull then hopefull of it.' 'God's Will bee donne,' writes Sir Ralph, with a piety which seems quaintly out of place.

The Widow finally threw him over in favour of 'a lord;' and the rejected suitor joined his father at Claydon. The country was in its full summer beauty; Sir Ralph, delighted to be at home again, and weary of the wiles of fashionable dames, might well turn his thoughts towards the little Perdita amongst the sheep-folds of East Claydon. He made some inquiries as to whether she would be Mr. Abell's sole heir, 'her father's brother,' Mun writes, 'is a very cunning littigious fellow, who meaneth to try for it; yet Sir Robert Wiseman, a civilian of the Commons, and uncle to the mother-in-law, [step-mother] of the young Lady, was imployed towards the cutting off of the intayle, which was done accordingly by Sir Orlando Bridgeman.'

Squire Abell was High Sheriff that year, but the flutter of pride and excitement which had been felt in the household at East Claydon, when he rode off with much pomp and circumstance to Buckingham, was quickly changed to sorrow; he died suddenly while performing his duty at the Assizes. The sympathy this sad event evoked in the County brought

his family into notice, and the rustic maiden became known outside the village limits as the owner of the picturesque old Manor-house and of the comfortable estate that went with it.

Mr. Maurice Gryffyth had been Vicar of East Claydon for nearly forty years, and was then a very old man; but Sir Ralph asked Mr. Butterfield to pay a visit of condolence on his account, to the widow and her step-child, and to put in a word as occasion served about a possible marriage-treaty. It was but five days after the High Sheriff's death that the Rector reported to Sir Ralph: 'I found the gentlewoman under such a cloud of sorrow and reservedness, that I could not without some difficulty fasten any discourse upon her, being never alone yet alwaies as it were alone and silent. When I tooke my leave I gave her a briefe touch of what I desired to have spoken more at large, if my modesty and her reservedness could have contrived it; yet what I sayd I heard from one of her confidents, (for from herselfe I received so low and still an answer that I could not tell what to judge of it) she tooke very kindly. I have been twice there since. . . she professes much respect to you, and sayth after she hath advised with her friends and the young Woman's she will make a more satisfactory returne, but would not by any meanes the young woman should be spoken to till she had first broken it to her. She wants not suters and those of good quality, yet I thinke you shall have the first admittance to treat. The young woman

Aug. 15, 1661

wants not wit, though she may breeding, and for ought I can learne is resolved to marry where she thinks she may live happy, and if there be a likeing between the young folke it may be a Match. . . . Richard Abell hath been here and is gone again; he would feigne have gotten the young woman to live with him and rely on him, but she absolutely refuses him. They are very confident their estate is sure in law, and he would cast about between the mother and daughter, but they are as shye of him as of a beare. There is with them now Doctor Sir Robert Wiseman, a grave discreet gent; and one Mr. Gale is sent for;' who had married William Abell's sister.

Edmund was courting Mary in September, when Sir Ralph, with little consideration for the new Mary's hopes, invited the old Mary to Claydon; but Mrs. Sherard declined to complicate the situation. 'I here your son is towardes a good fortewen,' she writes, 'I wish him all happiness, and by that account I have of her both for her fortewn and person, shee is very considorabull, soe I hope ther will be noe Stope of it.'

Oct. 7, 1661

Edmund writes to Dr. Hyde, 'I persist still in my sute to Mrs. Mary Abel, who tells me she will be much ruled by her uncle in law Gale, a proctor in Drs. Commons, to whom I presume you are no stranger; therefore I beseech you, if it be in your power, so to season this Gale that he may not blow any unprosperous wind towards me touching this affaire, yet I beleive I shall cast so sure an anchor that my affaire

will not wrecke should he endeavour it. You may assure him that my estate in reversion is 3,000*l.* a yeare, (my Father's debt only excepted, which you need not take notice off) so that my fortune is answerable to hers. Then we are the most convenient matches in England one to the other, because the best part of our estates joyne.'

Sir Ralph asked Mr. Butterfield to talk over matters again with Mrs. Abell; he was not desirous that Mary should make too generous a settlement on her step-mother, while he felt all the delicacy of interfering. The Rector writes, 'Sir, I have beene all this day from 11 of the clocke to foure this afternoone, at East Claydon; where I found them wondrous kinde and free both in their discourse and entertainment. . . . They do so openly and with so much affection own the Match with Mr. Verney, that except it were really done, I do not see how they could doe more. Stephen Choke sayes Mr. Verney will have as good a dispositiond gentlewoman as can be. Mrs. Goffe sayes they want Mr. Verney extremely, especially one of them. Mrs. Wiseman sayes she is resolved to marry him. I told them you had been like to have been robbed going up. The young woman coloured at it and seemed to be much concerned for it, and expressed a great deal of satisfaction for your escape. I told it on purpose, how true I know not, but had the relation from Will Lea. She weares the ring Mr. Verney gave her openly, and both speakes of him with much pleasing-

Nov. 15, 1661

Nov. 16, 1661

nes, and seemes to delight to heare of him. Truly, Sir, my thought there appeared in all they did and sayd, such innocent and hearty intentions as to the busines desired, that I could not in discretion presse any thing more than what easily dropt from them.' The next day the good Rector called again. 'I received yours last Sunday dinner,' he writes, 'and after evening service I carryed the inclosed from Mr. Gale to his Niece. She went up into her chamber to read it, and after a while came downe. I perceived by them they expected a letter from Mr. Verney. When she was sate I asked her if there was any rub in the busines. She sayd no, but that her uncle had sent for a perticular, which she wondered att, and the mother sayd she had told you the truth of the estate, and she thought you knew it as well as they themselves. I told them . . . that Mr. Gale . . . overvalued her estate and undervalued his. Mrs. Abell replyed she had heard him undervalue your estate, but she thought he had known theires better. Then the young woman sayd . . . She was confident her rents would hold at Claydon, so upon that we had some discourse in reference to yours, which they heard were high. But I satisfyed them that all your old inclosure was old rents; and for the new it was so upon improvement, that if it were hard rented now, in seven yeares it would be good.'

Mr. Butterfield said much about 'Mr. Verney's frugality' and that it would be 'no inconvenience to

have such a father in law. . . . Night came on, and we parted faire.'

The negotiations were complicated and tedious; not only were Mary's relations anxious to make the best bargain they could for the orphan heiress, but Edmund, behind Sir Ralph's back, was urging Mr. Gale to stand out in Mary's name for a larger present maintenance than his father was disposed to allow him. He begs Mr. Gale to answer his letters privately 'within a cover directed to my Mistress.' Dr. Thomas Hyde is now mentioned as 'my deare deceased friende.'

'I pray God you may deserve all,' writes the Rector to Mun. 'I have promised very faire for you. Should you not make my words good, I should not hereafter see her face without shame and sorrow. . . . I am sure I left her in a very good mode.

'I am, Sir, your officious friend and servant,

'Ed. Butterfield.'

While Mun's courtship stumbles at the settlements, there is another maiden who feels herself worse used than Mary Abell, a backward suitor being preferable in her opinion to none at all.

Betty Verney who, 'wherever she hath been, hath never yet been pleased,' was in 1660 'destitute of a habitation.' John Stewkeley has 'said so much,' that Cary with 'her train of babs' can no longer offer her a home. Betty is deeply in debt, 'beggarly in clothes,' 'physick keeps her very bare,' and she is

exposed to the 'pity that is contempt, and all the miseries that attend poverty and quality in conjunction.' Sir Ralph sends her eventually to a Mrs. Henderson at Goring, who with her husband keeps —like Mrs. Barbauld—a school for young gentlemen ; 'noe ill shelter,' Sir Ralph considers, 'till another can be found.' Betty allows that 'the Dr. and his Wife receved her veri kiendley,' 'but I am confident,' she writes, 'if you ware heare, you would not thinck this plas as fit for me as I thinck you doo, how ever I shal indever to stay tel it plesies God and you to reles me out of it.' Her real grievance was that her brother had failed in his duty to provide her with a husband. Her godmother Mrs. Isham, in her good-natured way, feels sure that 'a Mr. Blagrave,' whose family commands the Parliamentary seat at Reading, would be quite ready to marry her, but as he had wedded a Miss Brown 'a month since,' unknown to his elder brother, it was only dear Aunt Isham's sanguine temper that found an opening here, for as Betty puts it to Sir Ralph—'I thinck my marriing veri unlickley in any plas, and imposibil in this . . . but I desier to be holey ruled by you.'

Jan. 17, 1662

She had set her heart on living with her brother in London, but he cannot take in a maid, and she cannot 'Dresse her Head' herself. Sir Ralph, regardless of the fact that his own wigs required very skilled attendance, makes light of difficulties with which he has never had to grapple. 'I am sori you thinck that to be so esei, which I find so hard,'

writes the aggrieved damsel. 'At London, as you order matters,' he replies, 'there's noe hopes of paying your debts. . . London is a Theife will trick your purse as well as mine.' To this Betty 'ackknoliges' that she has not a word to say. Three months later her hair still remains intractable, it will neither rise in billowy heights, nor fall in showers of ringlets as the mode requires. 'As for the dresiong my head myselfe, I must deale injenoiosley with you; I can not yet doo it; I am confident goeing to plow would not mack me mor sick than the reaching up of my armes does.' April 19, 1662

Mrs. Henderson resolves at the end of May 'to tack no more borders,' 'the Dr. sais he will live with onley his privat famley,' so they request Betty to dispose of herself by Midsummer. 'The dressing of your head puts off severall persons from entertaining you,' says Sir Ralph. 'Write me word the utmost you can give and what attendance you doe expect for soe much money.' Betty can afford but '30*l.* A yere for all things, besides fireing and woshing,' she 'must goe very menely' and doubts she 'will not hould out at that nether;' but she has heard 'from A genteil woman of my acquientans to let me know if I pleased I mit live at hur ffathers, and she and I should be chamber feloes, herr name is Frances Boltton, and she lives in Broad Street at the eind towards Threadnedle Street.' Lady Hobart recommends the Charter House, where Lady Lovet and many others are; 'she may be drest and have a

roome to herselfe for 30*l.* a yere.' The arrangement with the 'genteel woman' is however carried out.

The poor little heiress at East Claydon is still writing sadly to her uncle in Sermon Lane about the 'tedious and odious delayes' in the marriage settlement, when Mr. Butterfield gives Edmund a pretty account of drawing Valentines, in the old Manor House. 'I found Mrs. Mary in her morning dresse, a white and blacke petty Coate and wast coate, and all cleane and fine linnen, so lovely proper and briske, I protest I knew her not at first sight, though I had been there a good part of the day but 3 dayes before. . . . They made themselves merry at Valentine's day in drawing Valentines, and very unwilling she was to be brought to draw (6 or 7 papires being put together rolled up) for feare she should not draw you. But being perswaded to it at last she ventured, and they say very fairely happened on you to her great satisfaction . . . I cannot but adde, had I gained her, as you have done, I would marry her, if she would have mee, though I beg'd; and thinke to see more happy dayes in such a choyce, than in another with thousands per an.' Edmund wrote warmly enough though not often. 'My dearest Mistrisse, If I had no other errant yet I ought to go a Pilgrim on foote to East Claydon, only to kisse that deare and pleasant hand, which so lovingly writ her self, most affectionatly faythfull till death unto me her slave, who must shortly make a journey of devotion to my saint there, even to my

Feb. 24, 1662

most passionately beloved Mistrisse Mary Abell &c. &c. . . . He writes again on May 1, 'Yesterday I returned from Gravesend, where I parted with my poore brother, who is gone for Aleppo, and desired me to present his humble service unto you, wishing both you and me all happinesse in the enjoyment of each other whereat I say Amen. . . . Madam I hope all may be agreed twixt Mr. Gaell and my father before my going downe to wayte upon you, and conduct you hither, which I am resolved shall bee next weeke at farthest.' This visit to London gave Mary something definite to talk about when her Mother and Aunt complained of Mun's neglect. She could not but feel that it was not thus that other maidens were sought and won. Squire Duncombe's zealous wooing of 'Joseph Busbye's daughter had greatly pleased' the elder ladies. *He* could not bear to be parted from his mistress for an hour; her family must be at his house, or he at theirs; he had been all the last week at Addington; 'always drunk,' alas, 'but if he could have had a priest, they say, he would needs have been marryed at midnight, in spight of all his friends, and away he is gone home with her again.' It was certainly disappointing to hear ten days later, that 'Squire Duncombe was quite off of his hot matching, and would venture her being sicke for love of him;' but need true love be as cool and reasonable as Edmund's was?

Mr. Butterfield was confounded. It was the second time he had been rash enough to meddle with

the young man's love affairs. All his previous experience had been of Edmund's hot-headed eagerness; no diligence and zeal on his own part could ever overtake his impatience. Night and day Mun was writing love-letters, which Mary Eure cared neither to read nor to answer. Mary Abell blushed with expectation, and grew pale with disappointment when the Rector's budget from Covent Garden contained no word for her. *Then* every member of the family had been tormented, and every conceivable influence set to work, to induce Mary Eure to grant Edmund an interview; *now* when the heart of Mary Abell had yielded almost before the siege was laid, he scarce took the trouble of coming to claim the
April 28, 1662 gracious welcome that awaited him. 'She weares his picture openly and confidently,' writes the anxious Rector. 'Mr. Verney does very ill in my minde to breake his word thus with the ladyes here at not coming down at the time prefixed, whose impatience in being thus kept from towne . . . is very manifest.' When the truant came at last, he scolded, argued and explained, but failed to satisfy them. Mary herself was provoked out of her usual patient silence, and Edmund writes in considerable irrita-
May 11, 1662 tion: 'Middle Claydon, 1662. Mon très cher pere, Vendredy au soir assey tard ie passay par East Claydon là ou j'entray et salué les damoiselles . . . le lendemain j'ally disner avec elles et donnay le present à ma maittresse, laquelle estoit fort irritée de ce que ie l'avois fait tant demeurer pour rien, car

disoit elle ce n'est pas que ie me soucie d'aller à Londres y ayant gueres d'affaires, mais c'est acause que ie ne puis pas m'imaginer que vous avez tant d'amour puor moy que vous pretendey, puisque vous pouviez estre si long temps sans me venir voir, et cela estant, j'advoue une follie bien grande d'avoir entretennu une telle personne, car disoit elle, quelle besógne aviez vous a Londres puisque Mon^r^ vostre père n'a rien conclu avec mon Oncle, puis elle me demanda pourquoy vous ne vouliez pas accorder avec son Oncle, à tout cecy ie respondis le mieux que ie peûs, et veritablement i'eut grand peine a l'appaiser.'

It seemed doubtful whether the long-promised expedition would prove very enjoyable, but Edmund hired a coach and made what haste he could to 'carry his women' to town.

Mr. Butterfield writes to him: 'no saint but the Virgin Mary can make you happy, sure you take more state upon you then Majesty it selfe.' Small pox is rife, and he trembles for his little country damsel 'in that ugly London this hot season.' . . . 'Make hast downe into the country,' he writes, 'that is now very sweet . . . but be sure before you come join the two Claydons together or 'twill never be halfe so pleasant to you. My humble respects to your deare Lady, the maker or marrer of your wealth.' June 9, 1662

On the 16th of June, Mr. Butterfield's anxiety reached its climax. 'It was first the private whispers

of some, but now 'tis Town and country talke,' he writes to Sir Ralph, 'that the match will not be; whereat many that beare you no good will, I feare, make themselves very merry, and your friends that wish well to the family are much troubled. . . . I wish with my heart it had never been thus carryed on. . . . 'Tis admirable to mee, that wise men should stand so peremptorily upon such inconsiderable nicetyes (for so they will seeme to plainer judgments) to the ruine of your credits and fortunes. . . . Why will you destroy your family, and render all the cost and paines you have been at in beautifying Claydon fruitles? . . . You may see my heart is full, but it runs over so strangely. I must have one fling at him too, and then I have done.'

Here follows the 'fling.' 'Mr. Verney, I cannot forbeare writeing. I had much adoe to forbeare comeing to you. . . . Sir if your father and you had studyed to make yourselves the talke of the Country, the game and sport of those that do not love you, and a grief to your friends, you could not have found out such another way. . . . If you could be careles of your selfe, yet consider you have gained the affection of an honest gentlewoman, whom if you should wrong by an inconsiderate breach, you will never be able to answer it while you breath, and looke to it, never any prosper that are guilty of treachery in that kinde. . . . Sir, I write this out of the bitterness of my heart, and out of an honest desire to be instrumentall to your good, not out of any busy humour to be

medling in other men's matters. . . . I am concerned in your welfare more than ordinary, and it vexes my very soul to heare how the base bumpkins triumph in the disappointment of this long expected Match, because forsooth now East Claydon shall not be inclosed, though that be the lest of those things that trouble mee for you in this affaire. Sir, excuse my zeale for you; I hope 'tis needles; put mee out of doubt by a comfortable word or two, or els I shall dy with melancholy. My respects to your good lady.'

Happily Mr. Butterfield's fears had overshot the mark; while the village gossips were still chuckling over the supposed scandal, the news reached Claydon that the marriage had actually taken place on the 1st of July, probably in Henry VII's chapel, Westminster. The presence of one relation was certainly dispensed with. Tom had been more than usually tragic; he only desired 'a sleepy potion' to put an end to life and its miseries, but he has now a more genteel grievance. 'I was not of an alliance neere enough to be invited to the marriage feast, yet I hope I shall be thought worthy to wear a brideall favour, not such as was bestowed on coachmen or lacqueys, but such an one as was bestowed on him whose equall I am in every respect. Sir, I should not have been soe bold a beggar had it not been layd in my dish on Fry-day last; . . . This by the way ffor my discours is of another matter and of farr greater concernement to mee then a wedding favour can be.' We can easily supply the rest!

The young couple spent three or four weeks in London, and seem to have been very happy together.

July 8, 1662 Sir Ralph writes to his son from Chancery Lane, 'My Lady Hobart will bee at home all this day, and Sir Nathaniell desires to heare your Trumpet either this evening between 6 and 7, or to-morrow . . . therefore endeavour to get your Master hether.' Edmund

July 16, 1662 writes to Mr. Gale: 'Owning as well for my Deare Mall as for my selfe . . . the courtesies done to us by you before, as well as since our marriage. . . . And truly my selfe and second selfe would wayte upon you, your sonne and daughter . . . but that our neighbours in Buckinghamshire would think and say we went only to avoyde them, if wee did not goe directly from hence to Claydon, a purpose to entertayne all that come to see us.'

July 24, 1662 To Sir Ralph he laments the expenses he must incur 'dans cette ville devorante.' Besides spending 43 shillings for his wife's wadded cloak, he pays 2 pounds 3 shillings for her silk mantle; 'one pound for my pocket money; Wife 10 shillings; gloves 8 shillings and sixpence; and for coache hire these 2 dayes 10 shillings. For, a Carman sent for and disappointed 6*d.*: Paid at a play for 8 maides in the 18*d.* places, 12*s.*: for their Extraordinaryes 6*d.*' 'Mr. Verney's frugality' had never existed except in good Mr. Butterfield's brain, and this was not the moment to call it into existence; indeed the cost of marrying an heiress is feelingly alluded to in the literature of the period. 'When the Bills of Wooing,

Wedding, and Honey-Year are defraid, the Baste I doubt proves more than the Roast.'[1]

But all else went well, the widow had become 'my Mother,' in Edmund's letters, and 'Sister Abell' in Sir Ralph's; great preparations were going on at Claydon to welcome the Bride and to introduce her handsomely to the whole Verney connection. The Widower-host's establishment was in the greatest commotion, no expense was to be spared to do them honour. Luce Sheppard looked out the best markets in town for fish and foreign fruits. Sir Ralph's extravagance in this respect had often been the subject of expostulations from the doctor; 'You are a noble gent. but a simple fellow, and doe not consider that 6*d.* a peece for lemons and Nobbs Brocadge doe not agree, and will not hold out, eat your sawce with veniger and lett lemons alone.' Luce had, however, succeeded in getting 'a dosin of lemonds att an exelent cheap rate . . . they cost but 3 shillings the dosen beside portage unwasht, if there be any truth in man, and lickly to be Dearer. Orenges are the worst at 12 pence apeece.' 'The sturgeon promiseth faire . . . in caes it want pickell, 'tis to be covered with beare viniger, the lowest price that the fishmonger alowed the kegg for was 15*s.* . . . the oysters att 2*s.*' The cellar was stocked with Rhenish Wine, Claret and Canary. The new housekeeper had to provide an impossible number of beds; coaches and horses were needed at once in opposite directions. Sept. 10, 1662

[1] *Letter of Advice concerning Marriage*, by A. B., 1676.

'Company I beleave you want not,' wrote Sister Pegg, 'how you will lodg all I cannot imaien.' Sir Ralph writes that Sister Pen must positively defer her arrival, till 'Sir Nathaniel Hobart returnes to London, (which will bee very suddenly), for now my sister Gardner takes upp the Parlour chamber, Sister Elmes the Oreng, Coz. Leeke the Lying-in chamber, and Sir Nath. Hobart and his Lady are to Have the old Drawing Roome; and the truth is I expect both Sir Thomas Bird and Sir Roger Burgoyne and his brother every day, and then they must lodg in the Gallery chamber, and I beleeve my Cozen Mun Hobart will bee heere on Satterday next, soe that I am forced to set upp a Bed for my Aunt Isham in the little drawing roome. . . . I have neither Roome, nor bedding left for any body, noe not for a servant, though I have already Borrowed, and must get Sister Elmes and coz. Leeke to lodg together, and made all other shifts that possibly I can. Neither can I send my coach on Tuesday to Alisbery, for that very day I am engaged to meete the deputy Leiftenants of this quarter at a Muster at Buckingham, and after that at Stoney Stratford . . . wherfore I must needes intreate you to deferre your jorney hether.' Penelope had her own reasons for leaving home immediately. 'If weeping in my Lodgins and in the Street by day and by night, would break my heart, in earnest it ware happy for me . . . Mr. Denton has bin so outragious with me, that he has run after me with his Knif in his

Sept. 15, 1662

hand, and vowed to Stob me; God mak me thankfull I clapt a dore upon me, and my maid turn'd the Kaye, so there I remained in the roome till his great fury was over. . . . He did till me that he should never be att rest till he had washed his hands in my blod.' 'Good Brother,' she continues, 'if your Letter had com time enough to my hands befor that I was in the coch, it had put a stop to my Journey, for God knows my hart. I entended you no trouble, but did belive that I might croud in amoung the reast of the companey.' Her husband joined her later, but at Claydon he was always on his best behaviour. An elaborate practical joke was devised against him by the wedding party. A letter reached him purporting to come from Gape, the Apothecary, of which a copy is labelled, lest posterity should misread it, 'A Sham Letter to John Denton that is Crackt.'

'Good Squire, I am given to understand by some freinds att Court, that your Mother is labouring with all the power and might shee can, to make your youngest brother William a Lord, and hath soe farre prevaild that shee hath gott a promise of it from his Majesty, which my Lady Studdall, your kinswoman, understandinge and being much concerned in the injury don to you thereby, hath prevailed soe farre by the interest she hath at Court as to put a stoppe to it, and if you will part with 500*l.* you shall have the honour your selfe and not your brother. Now truely if you will

take my opinion, I would have you to doe it, for when your brother shalbee sensible of the disgrace that will here by bee put upon him, undoubtedly hee will hang himselfe, and when your Mother knowes that, then shee will presently bee mad, and soe you being Eldest sonne the Law will cast the Estate upon you, and then you may begge her for a Lunaticke, and have the keeping of her your selfe, and soe may bee revenged of all the injuryes shee hath don you. Indeede you are mightyly beholding to my Lady Studdall, for shee hath not onely spoke to the King for you, but to both the Queenes, the Duke of Yorke and the Dutchesse, and there is not a Lord of the privie Councell but shee hath made them your freinds. The King is much taken with the Comendations that my Lady Studdall hath given of you, and hath comanded that you waite upon him as soone as you come to London. And it is generally belived that you wilbee one of the Lords of the privie Councell, and that will bring you in a Thousand pounds a yeare of it selfe; besides if you can by your wisdome be but as great a favourite as my Lord Chancellor is, you are made for ever. And I hope when you are in power you will not forgett your freinds. You see what hast you neede make to London. I will use no other arguments but what I have don allready, and onely tell you that I am, Sir, now your worship's, but I hope within a few days it wilbe your honour's most humble servant William Gape. I have sent the

messinger on purpose and therefore I pray you pay him.' Of the 'jest's prosperity' we hear nothing. There is a joke against the good apothecary that he has been 'choused by Sir Wm. Berkeley,' who has given him the slip and embarked for Virginia, apparently in Gape's debt.

Another merry letter was concocted by Aunt Isham and signed by the guests to induce their host to join the ladies at a picnic. 'Sir, you beinge one of his Magistes Debity Leve tennants, you may be pleased to take noties that too morroe aboute 10 a cloke there is a meetinge att Jhon Rose's House neere Runts Woods. The desine is too devower all as comes before them, as Egges, Baken and ale. For the sagane [sacking?] of your woode itt is thought fite as you a Peare in your Passone [person] for who knowes whate these Extravant Pople may doe in thare Ale, whene thay be hie-flone: so you are too sett all other consarnements a side too doe your utmost endevore to keepe in good order the Passons which intend too asemble them togeather.'

Betty Verney was not included in the wedding party, and got up 'a stolen matching' of her own, on purpose, so the sisters assured him, to revenge herself upon Sir Ralph. In October she had pronounced her health to be such that she was not long for this world—the next news is from Mun. 'Il est bruitté que ma Tante Isabeau a dessein de se perdre sur un pauvre curé: car je vis ces mots deshono- Nov. 1, 1662

rables escrits par Madame Tipping à ma Tante Isham.' There is a chorus of indignation in the family and Peg Elmes writes in great wrath to Sir Ralph, 'I assure you, you are not a loane in the sensur of my sister Betty's casting a way of herselfe, for now they bringe me very deepely in too . . , the trwthe is, thaere is onely a little folly layed to her charge for doeing it, but the chiefe blaime is cast on your selfe and me. Sumtimes I am a weary of hearing it, how she was cast of, and forsaken, and left to herselfe, noe cowntinance showd her, nor care taken of her, but sent to a person's house, to a scoole, like a babie. But as I heare the buesines, this might a fallen out any wheare, for the man as I am tolde, lived not theare, but by acsident preached in that church, and theare fell in love with her, which for allt I know, him or sich a nother might a dun heare, if she wolde be see simple to harken to sich a thinge. Now all are for your getting of him a liveing, which sum say you may doe of Sir Richard Piggot, and that is Grendon Parsonage, and your one whenever Mr. Butterfield dies. Soe now you are put in mind of it time enufgh.' Old Aunt Ursula who never lost an opportunity of making a sharp reflection on Sir Ralph, loudly declared that though Betty was a fool the blame was his.

Nov. 20, 1662

Cary considers that Betty's 'high discontents was the caus of this rash ackt of casting herselfe away, nether is shee so much to bee condemned as many

others. Lett us remember the Earl of Linsis's sister who married Dr. Huit,[1] which was bot a chapling and was as destitut of preferment when her marriage was knone, as this man is; and Sir William Russels dauftar, and to goe nearer homb, my cossin Townsend. And 2 of these had grat fortuns, and the third enough to subsist—sartainly did upon them—and yet none of thies utterly cast of by ther frinds, the rather sopported, and her case much more excusabill then theirs; for we have often red of men as have past for wise and pious both, yet the feare of want hath so far trans ported them, that they have lade A side not only reson bot religion and destroyed themselves, and I have often hard her say, that was her fear, whenever you failled, and truly souch thowts cause soul-sicknes.'

This impetuous bride of nine-and-twenty gave no relations any chance 'to come up for her wedding;' indeed Peg had previously informed Sir Ralph, how on the first rumour of the 'maridg' she had sought her sister for four hours in the city 'and att the last mett with one as I knew she went out of her lodgen with, which in my disscourse with him, I fowned to fallter much in ansering the questions I put to him but att the last I threttned high if he did not bringe her out, or let me know wheare she was, I wolde

[1] Lady Mary Bertie's marriage was an odd instance to quote of the happy results of marrying a clergyman, for Dr. John Hewitt took so active a part in the plots for murdering Cromwell that he was beheaded on Tower Hill.

come with that as should make him doe it, to them of higher power.' After these ambiguous threats had been launched, apparently at the head of the Bridegroom, he hastily retreated, undertaking that Betty should call on her sister that afternoon, 'accordingly she came allthough too lait, for she maryed the Thursday after she came to town.' There is a letter from Betty full of abject apologies 'for this great folt of mine which I should bee willing to Ack Knolig upon my knees ware I in presans too doo it,' but her new signature writ large at the bottom of the page reminds her brother that the great fault can never be undone, and she plucks up spirit enough to assert that 'I am not so much lost, as sum thinck I am, beecos I have maried one, as has the reput of an oneist man, and one, as in time I may live comfortably with.'

Nov. 21, 1662

Even such a modest amount of domestic happiness seemed far out of reach, though Mr. Adams had one or two narrow escapes; 'I was within 24 hours of a parsonage in Cheshire for your new Brother, of £120 per annum, but it is gone,' writes Dr. Denton; 'we must look about us for some perferment for him.'

The broad, kindly and wholly commonplace face of Charles Adams looks out of its black frame at Claydon, without a redeeming feature to suggest the romantic instinct that prompted his runaway marriage. He eventually became 'Clerk of great Baddow

Elizabeth Verney
wife of the Rev. Charles Adams.
from a painting at Claydon House.

E: Adams

in Essex,' and a highly respected member of the family circle, but meanwhile it was a standing joke with the sisters when they wished to torment their busy elder brother, that they would call upon him in the morning, and talk about Betty!

And so while poor 'Adam and Eve,' as Dr. Denton called them, met with nothing but reproaches and hard fare, Edmund and Mary were being feasted and honoured at Claydon. Good Mr. Butterfield saw the country damsel he had so gallantly championed, the central figure of the family rejoicings; the square pew so long abandoned to moths and spiders, was filled to overflowing; the Rector himself in the glory of his new surplice for which Sir Ralph had supplied 'the cloth,' beamed down upon them all with unmixed satisfaction. Dame Margaret and Dame Mary from their niches in the chancel looked kindly upon the girl who was to carry on their work at Claydon, and take the woman's place in the empty house. A few weeks of the intimacy and confidence of married life had changed her careless lover into a devoted husband, and after enjoying Sir Ralph's hospitality and the festivities that fashion prescribed, the Edmund Verneys were to make their home in the old Manor House at East Claydon where Mary Abell had spent her childhood. But the assembled aunts and cousins, who warmly applauded Edmund's assiduous attentions to his young wife, were provoked to find that she was at

times moody, capricious, jealous or unreasonably depressed. Whence came this strange shadow, which seemed to alter Mary's whole character, and threatened to darken her life just as a happy and useful career was opening before her ?

PORCH OF THE WHITE HOUSE, EAST CLAYDON.

CHAPTER II.

IN CHANCERY LANE.

O! let me not be mad—not mad, sweet Heaven.'

1662–1665.

Sir Nathaniel and Lady Hobart, the 'Sweet Nat' and 'Sweet Nan' of Sir Ralph's early days, were still in middle life the truest of friends and the most delightful of correspondents. Anne Hobart, with as warm and constant a heart as her sister, Doll Leake, was more a woman of the world, and was a very capable mistress of a family, and a great lover and grower of flowers. In 1652 Sir Nathaniel was made a Master in Chancery 'in Sir Ed. Leech his dead place,' and in 1658 the family removed from Highgate, that he might live near the law courts. Lady Hobart gave as her address 'A greate house in Chancery Lane, over against Lincoln's Inne, near the Three Cranes, next dor to the Hole in the Wall, within two dors of Mr. Farmer's and one dor of Judge Ackings.' The house was further distinguished as being 'nigh to the Pumpe' and as having 'a very handsom garden with a wash hous in it.' The rent, 55*l.* a year, was considered a heavy

one, and as there were more rooms than they required, Anne Hobart set her wits to work to reduce her expenses, by letting a part of the house to relations during the London season. Her first experiment of taking in her married daughter, Lady Smith, was not a success, and her next overtures were made to Sir Ralph, who since his return to England in 1653 had kept a *pied à terre* in Covent Garden or in Russell Street.

Sir Ralph liked the idea, but other relations, who were accustomed to lodge near him, made indignant protests against his removal to so remote a quarter as Chancery Lane. 'Uncle Dr. and self mander most greviously att it,' writes Peg Elmes; 'I wish it a thousand inconveanyantis to you, & them moare as temted you to it.' On the other hand, Lady Hobart, with her hospitable anxieties, was not always easy to satisfy. 'You were not kind to me,' she writes one evening that Sir Ralph had dined out, when she had been 'busy all the morning buying a banquet, and in the afternoon at my Lady Bartley's to tech her to do paist, wich are all at your sarvis . . . but you not coming I intend to send my swetmeets into Iarland.' But on the whole Sir Ralph was free to come and go as he liked, and the evenings spent with Sir Nathaniel were most congenial to him.

The winter of 1662–3 found Sir Ralph with Edmund and Mary Verney settled in their own suite of rooms in Chancery Lane, to Lady Hobart's

intense satisfaction. Her daughters, Frances and Nancy, whose strong wills sometimes brought them into sharp collision with their mother, were fond of cousin Mun, and gave his bride a kind welcome.

Mary Verney's health and spirits had been very variable; when she first arrived she was popular with them all, but she became subject to fits of moody silence or of hysterical excitement during which she was a torment to herself and all about her. She vexed her husband with unreasonable suspicions and imaginary grievances, or, as Dr. Denton expresses it, 'Zelotipia [jealousy] is gott into her pericranium, & I doe not know what will gett it out.' So disturbing an element in the house completely destroyed Sir Ralph's comfort; he suddenly left for Claydon and 'frightened them with his sad looks when he went away.' March 26, 1663

Lady Hobart was constantly urging him to return. 'Dear Sir Ralph, to tell you how much we want you a nights, is not to be put in this paper, but hasen up, & you shall see how much you shall be mayd on. Your por son will be a very misarabell man in his wif I fear; be sure you chuse a beter, but one you must have. To be serus, I am greved at hart, & though I have many trobells, yet 'tis as much to me as any of my on. If sorow or tears cold cuer hur she wold, for it has put a genarall sadnes in us all, & we wish you hear, but it can not but be a sad sight to you. I wish from my soll you had had mor comfort, but you ar a wis man, & must mack March 25, 1663

the best of this, and thinck this world has mor crosis in it then blisings, but I hop you will at Last by your goodness rech haven.'

Dr. Denton reports that Mary is 'much worse, laughs more then before, speakes more boldly, descants uppon by standers, myselfe, Dr. Ent (for whom we sent), Sir Nat: Hob:, Sr. Wm. Smyth, & few escape her. She is now averse from all phisick & bleedinge, soe that I doubt we shall have much to doe with her. If she will in any measure be ruled, I hope to get her out of this, but I shall be ever fearfull of returnes. . . . Though her illnes be out of the usuall Road of other distractions, yet I doe not like it the worse, but doe believe she is very capable of Cure.'

April 9, 1663

Sir Ralph thinks that 'all the Phisick in the World will not cure her, unlesse she strive against her Malancholly, & in a good measure proove her owne Doctor.' He sends 'a couple of Rent Capons the miller sent my Daughter with two Dozen Puddings for Lady Hobart & another two Dozen for Mary's Breakfast,' but he declines to return. Aunt Isham occupied Sir Ralph's room during his absence. 'Now Mis Hubbord and I have a Little more pleasure in your Bead than we had att the first,' she writes; 'itt was so soft as itt had all most kiled us. So now we have gote a quilte & Lie very well. But we wante your good companey.'

March 23, 1663

Edmund had little chance of getting his affairs into order with such distracting anxieties and

expenses, and he was often trying to economise in the wrong place. He had not a horse to ride, and his father who 'is overstocked with Jades, having 17 at grass & 8 more at the house,' will not lend him any, 'because you ought to keep your own, the country wonders how you can bee without them, & censures you very much for it.'

He begs his father to be at the Manor Court which the steward holds in his absence at East Claydon: 'Tout iroit mieux, car vostre presence abbattroit leur insolence, à cause de la veneration qu'ils vous doivent.'

Mr. Butterfield rates him vigorously for his management of his wife's land: 'I hate this rack-renting 'tis worse than usury . . . my own small rents come in roundly without any calling for.' He fears Mun will soon have all his land thrown on his hands, 'for none will ever come to your termes but some ale-house chap-men that never mean to pay. 'Tis not for the profit of the landlord to have to do with such customers, out of whose fingers 'tis more difficult to get rents, then to do all one's other busines. 'Tis a poore trade to be alwayes proffering one's commodities either to such as we know will not buy, or will not pay. Sett moderate rates upon your land, & you shall not want tenants, otherwise you shall have but little rent. This is truth, & you will finde it so.' Feb. 1, 1663

The White House was still in Mrs. Abell's hands, and there was a long but friendly bargaining over

the terms on which Edmund should take possession of it. He writes to Mr. Butterfield, 'I will give my mother 30*l.* a yeare for her house & horsestall & closes, she paying all taxes but Church & poore and chimeney money; but then I will have it for 99 yeares, if she so long live, that is for her whole terme . . . you may assure her from mee, that shee shall command that or anything else that I have in this world, & so present my humble service to Her & her sister.'

Mary Verney's health improved; in the summer of 1663 she and her husband stayed with Sir Ralph at Claydon House, and went with him and Lady Elmes to visit Lady Vere Gawdy; and then on to the Warners,[1] rich relations of Mary's, living at Milner in the same neighbourhood. Lady Hobart is curious to know from Sir Ralph 'how you did lick your tret. I hear it was much beyond Croshall, i desier the relason from cosen Elmes.'

There are 'large expressions' of regret from all the company at Croweshall at their departure, to the which Sir Ralph desires to make a suitable return, but he says to Doll Leake, writing from Milner at

Oct. 3, 1663

11 o'clock at night: 'Though you love a long letter, you know I love a short, & I am sure you are ever best pleased with what is most agreeable to the Lazy Humour of, Deare Cozen, your sleepy Dull, yet most affectionate humble servant.' To Lady Gawdy he writes, 'I thanke you hartily over and over againe;

[1] Mrs. Warner was Mr. Gael's daughter.

'tis the King's own way of Rhetoricke when hee receives the greatest Boones, soe that I hope it may be allowed to bee courtly & in Fashion.' Dr. Denton hopes that Mary 'is welcome home, & that she hath left Mrs. Zelotipia behind, or else I am sure she is not come well home in mind at least.'

Edmund writes in November to Lady Hobart: Nov. 11, 1663
'Madam, my thankes to you for receiving my family last winter, must at this time bee Ushers to desire the same favour of your Ladyship, if it may sute with your occasions, for I esteeme it not the least of my happinesse to live among such good company; to the end I may be as little trouble as possible, I doe intend, if you thinke fitt, to bringe up Besse a purpose to cleanse my chamber, & to doe all other necessary work, so that I shall be one more in number now then I was before.' He will wait on her 'about the latter end of the Terme, & stay till a little after Christmasse.'

Lady Hobart, undeterred by former experiences, was full of hospitable preparations. Sir Ralph's quarters must be quite to his liking. 'I have whited Oct. 16 1663
the room, & stars hed, & clened the bed and hanings. Pray send me word whether the chamber shall be paned at the full bignes or no. If it be, it will be Ligheter at the chimny, but then your beach box must stand in one of the closets. The dor must goo in by your man's beds fet. Now fur the stabels. i have my chos of 2; one in Magpy Yard. Thar is a pond in the yard to wash the horses and

very good water. It will hold four horsis, and the hay loft will hold 4 lod of hay; ther is bins for ots. Thay say they ar very honist and sivell people; judg Ackings coach has stod thar this 14 year. Now thar is another at the Red Harp in Feter Lan; tis one turning mor beyond the Magpy, but it has the same convenency. The Magpy is 16 pound a year, if thay Log a man; the other i can have for 14 pound.'

A little later she has 'paynted all the windows and mayd all clen. You may come when you will, but you sayd you will Ly on a quilt, thar fer I must beg you to bring on, for i have non. I have mayd all my hous beter than it was for clennes, but i am very wrought in my stomack. Pray send me som grens to set agans my new wall & som Jeseney & hunicuckells.'

For Edmund and his wife she has prepared the 'gret chamber. I now want a bed; if it be not to much trobell to you to send up som curtans & valanc, for at presant I want som. If it be your wroght ons, or any other, it will be much mor convenant for them, & thay shall hav the Low rom at thar sarvis to set in, & to bring all compeny in to, for we did want that very much Last year. Hur mayds shall have a very good Login to thar selfs whar hur truncks shall stand. . . . Pray tell Bes King she must Leve tiling storys; my mayds dred hur, thay Live quietly senc she went. But for what she sayd to me, I forgive hur, & wold have her com

to dow thar worck; it will be very convenant for me. She may wash all thar clos hear. Say nothing to hur master, & pray Let them bring up 2 par of shets for thar on bed. I will have on hundred of fagets Layd into your wod hous redy aganst you com. My mayd shall Ly in all the beds, & all shall be well ared.'

Mrs. Abell hopes that her dear daughter Mary may 'inioy the pleasures of the towne, which God be blessed, you have all the reasone in the world soe to doe. I am troubled with that illness at my hart that I was when you left me. I have often wished my selfe with you since you went from hence, that I might in some part partake of your pleasure, but that is a thing that I have bine weaned from a long time, & the onely comfort that I have now left me is your Deere selfe. I have soe great a tye & obly-gation upon me for my Dearest of frinds sake, as allsoe for your owne sweet deportment allways towards me, that it hath for ever obliged mee.' But these loveable qualities were again to be sadly overclouded. The noise and bustle of town life probably affected poor Mary's nerves, and she had not been long in Chancery Lane before the distressing symptoms returned with increased violence.

The relations had hoped much for Sir Ralph from Edmund's marriage. His extreme kindness to all the younger ladies of the family, and the pleasure he took in their society, promised great happiness to a daughter-in-law. He had given his son's bride the

kindest of welcomes. We know that he was not exacting as to the amount of book-learning to be demanded of a woman, but he was fastidiously alive to any lack of politeness and good breeding, and no lady could be permitted to do the honours of his house who did not come up to his fine standard of taste and courtesy. Such were the traditions left by his mother and his wife; and it was their want of refinement that made the society of some of his sisters so trying to him. Mary Abell, though homely and unformed, had the gentle voice and manner belonging to an unaffectedly sweet and modest nature, and she was young enough to learn all Sir Ralph's example would have taught her, had not her unhappy malady completely estranged him from her.

The degree of moral responsibility attaching to actions on the borderland of sanity, was a problem far beyond the medical science of the day; and Sir Ralph took a severe view of Mary's want of self-control. As she grew worse, the slovenliness of her person and attire, and the indecorum of her conduct, aroused in him nothing but sheer disgust; her screams, and her still more terrible laughter so irritated his nerves, that his only wish was to fly from any house in which she might be. All Lady Hobart's plans for him were overthrown; the old opinion once more prevailed, that he would be driven to marry again, and that his choice was likely to be Vere, Lady Gawdy. Another version of the rumour had reached that lady, and she hastens to congratu

late him: 'I heare you are not farr from inioyinge A Considerable pleasur, if our sex might procure it you; if it bee so, may all that renders women les worthy then Men bee exempt from the Parson you shall make happie.'

He let them talk, and left town for Claydon in January 1664, making the journey in one day. Lady Hobart entreats him while he is alone to go to bed betimes; 'i mack my Nat dew so . . . all here want you espeshally Nancy,' whose wild manners had 'gron sivell' in Sir Ralph's company. 'We have a bad day or tew with my swet she cosen Varney. She has the mesells, & I fear in gret danger . . . your son Lis in a palet in hur chamber. I must tell you, if she war the quen she cold not be beter locked to. I wold not for the world have hur dy in my hous, but god's will must be don. She has asked her husban pardon, & is sory for what she has don, & has promased to be a new woman if she live. My Nat wants you very much, for we are much a Lon.'

Doll Leake writes, 'I hear she is very sensible of the ill opinion she has had of hir husband; I pray she may live to deserve the kindness he has ever paid hir. I am sure he will be willing to remit all that is past, and if she lay that yumer a side, she has so many good things in hir, it will be a great contentment to him, and satisfaction and plesur to all that love him.' Feb. 10, 1664

The best side of his nature was brought out by his wife's sad condition, much as she had tried his

patience; the terrible symptoms which so repelled and disgusted Sir Ralph, only made Edmund more constant and pitiful in his attendance upon her. He sent frequent reports of her health to Claydon.

Feb. 1, 1664

'Mon très cher pere,—J'ai beaucoup a vous escrire touchant plusiers choses, mais je ne puis rien dire, je suis tellement affligé a cause du tres grand danger dans lequel ma pauvre femme gist à present, elle a les Rougeoles dont le danger je crois est passé, mais elle a une fièvre continue, qui me perce le coeur, par manque de repos n'ayant point dormi il y a environ cinq nuits. . . . Dieu a soign des petits aussi bien que des grands, & pour moi je mets tout mon espoir en lui seul, & je le supplie avec toute soumission imaginable qu'il daigne redonner la pleine santé à ma chère et vertuese femme.'

The household in Chancery Lane was struck by the sensibility he displayed; his father is afraid of his being too constantly with his sick wife, and begs that he will walk in the garden as often as possible; while Mr. Butterfield acknowledges 'though I were heartily sorry for the cause of your sorrow, yet it pleased mee to heare how passionately you tooke it, & I hope this demonstration of your affection, will take off all occasion of future jealousies.'

In a few days Sir Ralph was back in town; poor Mary having recovered from the measles, fell much more seriously ill with small-pox. Doll Leake's solicitude on her behalf was tempered with dread of the infection for lives still more precious to her. She

is anxious that Sir Ralph should not go into the sick chamber. 'If she lives, which I hope she shall, I pray she may deserve the care and kindness hir pore husband has had and taken with hir. I pray send to Mrs. Wisman—Sidenham I mean—for a medson for hir face. It is very safe, & never any peted [pitted] that yused it. Both Mrs. Abell's sisters yused it, and were very full.' Mary happily recovered 'without any inconveniency to her complexion.' Mar. 3, 1664

Mrs. Abell adds some motherly advice to her congratulations: 'There is now noe thing more remaines to make yourselfe hapy in this world, then to have a cheerfull hart, & a good opinion of your selfe: which I doe not doubt, being soe sensible of your owne condision, but you will indevour what lyes in your power to gaine.'

Nothing was more completely out of Mary's reach than a cheerful heart, but she seemed fairly well, and by the advice of the whole family Edmund went to Claydon with his father, for rest and change, after his arduous nursing. Lady Hobart, Frank and Nancy offered with unselfish courage to take charge of his wife.

The state of public affairs made Sir Ralph and Dr. Denton very anxious. A subservient House of Commons was ready to surrender the chief safeguard which the Long Parliament had provided against the King governing without calling a Parliament.

It was in accordance with the best traditions of

the county, that the member for Buckingham should throw himself into the breach, risking the loss of the Court favour which he had been thought to value only too highly. 'The debate on tuesday was about the Trienniall Bill,' writes Dr. Denton, 'for the Damninge of which Prynne spake most desperately & S^r^ R[ichard] T[emple] as desperately to preserve it, & if all be true made a very coxcominy of Pryn confoundinge him demonstratively, causinge severall Acts to be read shewinge his palpable mistakes or wilfull perverting the text, & that the Bill was not an Act of Grace, but the peoples right & ought not to be denied them, nay that it was A condicention in the Parl^t^, & a wavinge of part of theire right by takinge a Trienniall, when an Annuall parl^t^ was theire due by former Acts of parl^t^ w^ch^ he caused to read, & for w^ch^ you may be sure he is farther become A white Hall Favorite the cleane contrary way.' He adds a few days later, 'Mr. Vaughan came to towne on Satterday, & on Munday he pealed it away about Tryennialls an houre & halfe by the clock, spake soe desperately home that he out-shott S^r^ R. T. ten bowes length, but all in vaine, the Bill is ingrossed, marcht upp to the Lords & soe farewell Magna Charta.'

Mar. 25, 1664

Mar. 31, 1664

Sir Nathaniel Hobart is not of Dr. Denton's opinion; he thinks that Mr. Solicitor in defending the new Bill 'had both right & rhetorick of his side.' The Lords passed it 'without any alteration, tho' there wanted not Critticks who quarreld both with

April 1, 1664

the form & the words, but the wiser Lords thought it not safe to returne it to the Commons with any amendment for fear of Mr. Vaughan & Sir Rich. Temple.' 'Vaughan is lookt upon as malcontent;' he 'would have raised a filthy dust' had he reached town sooner.

The news of Mary does not improve. 'We have had a sad day with your dafter,' writes Lady Hobart. 'She now hats us all but thar to mayds, & this day she has bin kind to franck wich dos ples me much, for she must not be out with all at once. I have sen your chamber very clen & Locked up, for non shall Ly thar till you com. My she cosen would fan have Lyed thar as soon as you went, & have had her hus com doun to hur, but i bed hur be contented, for no body shold Ly thar. I have no mor to say but Love your self, & mack much of honis Sir Raphe, for when he is gon, his frinds will not find shuch another. I am suer por me shant, thar for Love hur that is Sir your sarvant to command A. Hobart.' Mar. 20, 1664

'Tusday our cosen was very ill all day, and hyly discontented. At night thay had no way but to give hur a sleping pell, & she slep all night & till ten in this morning, & wacked very tame but sulen. We had much adow to get hur to eat a bet, but with much in trety at Last she did eat a leg of a rabit, & had a mind to goo a brod & i did goo with hur as fur as Kensington, & as we cam back she wold goo in to the parck, & if she will she must and did, & was very well but sayd very letill, but as we cam Mar. 23, 1664

hom she wished she had never com to London, but stayd with dear mother, for nobody dos love hur but she and por Jan. And tould the gearls & me she mought have lived if she had had som about hur, & raled on us all, & begon to gro very bad. So at last I did persuad hur to wright to hur hus to let hur Live with hur mother. So she is now a writing in gret wroth. She says he shall hear a pes of hur mind. Bats [Dr. Bates] is out of town,' but Dr. Denton at night 'gave her dainty ease, & soe she continued all Wenesday, & marcht abroad.'

Edmund rejoices to hear of the slightest improvement; he writes to Mary from Claydon:

Mar. 29, 1664

'My Deare wife,—It was no small joy to mee the reading your lines, and the hearing of your riding fourth, whereby I take it for granted that you are not so ill as you would seem to be—this good newes came to me by my man after my returne from Northampton Fayre, where I have bought you three gallant bay coache-horses, for to carry you abroade a ayring after your tedious sicknesse, therefore pray thee to be of a couragious & cheerefull spirit and chase away all those timerous & melancholy thoughts which make thee conceit thy selfe in more danger than really thou art: my deare soule if thou hast any kindnesse for me be ruled by me & the rest of thy freinds, who are with thee, and do not think thy selfe more knowing then all of us, but thinke thy husband adviseth thee best, when he desireth thee to banish all despayring fancies, & to submitt unto our

great Makers pleasure, be it in life or death or any affliction whatsoever, & that not only without repining but also with cheerefulnesse: and as touching my particular part, thou mayst assure thy selfe it hath & shall be acted with all the demonstrations of a pure and sincere love towards thee, & I do send my servant as my forerunner to know at this time how thou dost, hoping to heare yet of thy growing better & better before I see thee, w^{ch} shall bee as soone as possibly my businesse will permitt, yea & sooner too if thou requirest it . . . . . pray present my services to my 2 cosens H: and to my Uncle Dr., as also to his colleague Dr. Bates, & let mee find by thy observance of my desires that thou dost remember

Thy most Loving husband

EDMUND VERNEY.'

The improvement is not sustained, and Lady Hobart's mind misgives her: 'Pray dow not stay to Long, nor kep your son, for i am so full of fears that i dar not stur, for fear she shold have a freck of runing out . . . in earnes she is very disablegin, I fear you have played the arant Theife with me for all my fin seeds, I have bin starck mad for them; it was ill don to tack all. Send me som of them agan, or your wig shall off. As the weather is windy & stormy abrod, we have had our shar with my cosen with in. She has bin very ill yuemered, by fits i may tell you mad. She has cryed & scremed & Mar. 1664

singed & raled on us all, & por docker tow. Now Bats is all & all with hur; she says she thinks in hur hart he is not yet corupted, but thar is nothing but hur mayd Jan, but longs for hur deth. She dos says such things as flesh and blod never hard. To days i kept from hur, only morning and night Locked in to see how hur to mads did order her. I be Leve if she had all hur estat in her powr, Jan shold have it be for all the world.

'She has tacken ephsome waters this thre days. I fear her ill yumer will never be quered [cured]. For two days she did cry send for hur hus, but now she is off from that, but she dos hat us all. O dear sur raph i feare she will never be well; hur por hus will have a sad tim with hur. He must stick to it, but for us we may be quit of it in tim. I lock on her as one has brought a fourtin to your son, but tis with so many ill yuemers, that he had beter have had a sober woman in her smock. God give him pashenc to bar his cros. . . . His best way will be to kep hur in the country, but you can never be abell to Live with hur, so tis well to Leve them; he will be wery of his Lif with hur, but I wold never wish him to bring hur to town agan. My hous has bin very unfortunat to hur, & she says she will set a cros on it. I love my cosen, but til she is beter, I shall never desier it. We shall be very hapy & quiet when we have got you agan. The garden locks so findly you wold be plesed with it. Dear Sir be Leve i cold sarve you next to my Nat with my Lif. . . .

She says we wold poisen hur. Pray Let hur husband com up, for i can not abyd to be raled at. He will kep hur from it.'

Her next letter has been labelled 'Lady H. persuades Sir R. V. to marry.' 'Sir I am Joyed to hear you ar will. You have the plesuer of the country & the fin flours now in the spring, but I cold wish that worck men war as hard to get as gold then you wold not set them a worck. You had beter be hear & viset the fin wedows so in time you mought get a companion; tis tim, for when i lock on that plas whar you have Layd out so much mony, & you still a lon at Bed & Bord, i thinck half that, with a good vartus hansom sober bedfelow war beter, as now your cas stands. For I fear your sonn will not have much comfort in this woman, for in deed she gros wors than ever. She gros very malisas in hur toung to us all. She has set us all out to Sir Robart wisman in a bas maner. However i will bar with hur, & dow all i can till hur husband coms, wich I hop will not be long, for she is not to be without him; she is afrayd to dow twenty things when he is hear that she dos now. Still she is fond of Jan, & if i may say betwen you and i, she is mor to hur then all the world; she now Lys with hur.'

Dr. Denton writes, 'Your daughter is noe changelinge yet; A Diabollical Agew, up and downe, one day Hosanna, the next crucifiye. She hath not many dayes to live, then not many weeks, soe I am now drivinge A subtle trade & began yesterday. I gave

her a peece in gold, and she is to give me 40*l.* if she lives to that day 40 weeks, & I hope that noble soul her husband will make it good; the reason is demonstrative, for he will be well paid for her keeping, which is now the constant burden of her songe. Cock sure she putts on & assumes much, very much of the vastly extravagant humors. My Lady Hobart is soe disobliged and soe weary that she longs much for Mun's presence. Consider of this crotchet for Mun, when he finds he does no good on her to feigne travellinge, & to leave her to her selfe with an allowance.'

An entreaty for Edmund's return is the ever recurring burden of Lady Hobart's letters; she is in deep distress at the poor woman's vagaries. 'She gos out with her mayd to Lincsondend chapell. Thay goo so Lick trampis, so durty tis a sham to see them. Docker denton did chid them soundly. Now she will have coridon [Dr. Colladon]. Truly she is starck mad . . . Sir Robart wiseman says it war fit she shold be removed . . . for his part he wold not have hur for a hundred pounds in his hous. Thay say he gave hur very good councill, & did chid hur mitily. . . . I fear she will be wors; she eats one bet & feds Jan with another, & drincks to hur, & they Ly in on another's arms; so much dearnes i never saw. She bit Bes to-day & tor hur hed, for she was in the hall, & begon to fall a roring, & she tock hur up in hur arms & cared hur up, be caus thar was compeny about. Now dear sur Raph send her hus up, for she

will dow som extravagant thing, & I can not help it. I have don all I can, it will not dow. Dear dow not tack it ill that i dow not goo to hur, for my care shall be never the Les. . . . I am slepy and vexet, & now I fear I have vexed you, but I say no mor.'

Sir Ralph still lingered on and was anxious to delay his son's return to such sad duties. Dr. Denton supports Lady Hobart's appeal. 'Dear Raph, Cuckow-time approachinge I must be in fasshion & continue in one tonge. I leave the pretty stories to my Lady to write, but its high time both you and your son were here.'

This letter crossed one of Mun's to his wife :—

'My deare Mall,—I thank you for your kind expressions in your last to mee, but I should reckon my selfe much more obliged to you, if your behaviour toward my friends and your observance of my desires were answerable, I must needs tell you what civill respect and kindnesse you have showed to them, I shall esteeme it as done to my selfe, as likewise the contrary, therefore as the saying hath it Love mee & love my dogg, so I say that if you love me you'le love those that are my reall & worthy freinds. I wish I may not find when I come to London that you have been faulty towards some of them, I am afraid you are too apt to it. I speake this because I do so highly abhorr in my owne nature that devilish vice Ingratitude : and now I must tell you besides that I will never beleeve you love me unlesse you observe me, & do what ever I would have you to doe, I have

April 4, 1664

performed so thoroughly to you, that few husbands would have done so much whereby I have made it appeare that I do love you more than you do mee, for you have not done it to mee, nay so far are you from it that you persist still wilfully in your idle and ridiculous imaginations that you shall die untimely, with many the like follies etc: Thus do you yeild to your black melancholy and dismall humours so much that they overcome you at last in such measure as to make you seeme extravagant; but pray do so no more, & then & never till then will I beleeve that you love me.'

April 9, 1664

Dr. Denton writes again, 'As soone as I had writ you this morninge, I went accordinge to custome to visitt my neece, who kept me an houre by the clock, & I beleeve by her good will would not be without a Phismicary, a minute by night nor by day, & therefore I must love her dearely, but in truth I used her very coarsely, for she drest her selfe in all hast to goe to church, & I kept her in by force. She was gott halfe way downe staires, & I made Besse take her in her armes & carry her upp, I told her in plaine tearmes that she was mad & was now to be used as those in Bedlam, & that her maids should be putt away, & strangers putt to her to master her, & that I would not venture her husband to sleepe with her. Though I talked all the while after this rate, yet (whatever she thought) she gave me not an ill word, but seemed rather the better for it. You will find that rough meanes will prevaile best & most

with her. I pitty poore Mun, & longe to see you both here, and soe good night to you.'

'Yesterday docker Bats saw hur in a wors fet then ever he did,' Lady Hobart writes '& he sayd he wold com no mor. At night she bet hur mayd Jan out of hur bed, & was raving all night. I am fan to hyer one to wach, for the mayds are afrayd. She sent this day for Docker Corydon; she has sent ofen, but he cam not til to day. She hats us & the docker to deth. She struck at me, but i am carfull not to com to near hur—I kep knifs & shears from hur. Ah how i pety por cosen mun, that must bar this hevy cros. This day she raves for Prydian [Dr. Prujean] but till my cosen coms i will dow nothing. I will run away if he coms not. Dear sur, pety your son & at present por me. Tusday was hur bearthday, & the docker tould hur he wold com & drinck hur health, & so he did, & bespock all he wold have & brought all his family. They set him on the scor abot forty shilings, ther was Mr. fuler & his wif & all the rest, & thay war very mery. She cam down, & for half an hour did cary hur self will, but be for & afther she was as bad as ever.' Lady Elmes wrote of these dismal festivities to her brother:—'The 5th instant we all drancke your helth att my lady Hobart's; my uncle Dr. inviteing himselfe & all of us heare to supper to my Neese Verney, it being her berthday. Soe she was forsed to treat us, my uncle asureing her he & all his wolde come to her. I wish I had cause to say we did it with Joy.' April 7, 1664

Mun returned soon after his wife's birthday; he had only been gone a fortnight, though his absence had seemed so long to Lady Hobart. He wrote to his father:—

April 8, 1664

'J'arrivai hier ici, ou j'ai trouvé ma femme dans la salle, en mauvais humeur, me disant qu'elle estoit bien aise de me voir auparavant de mourir. . . . Ce matin elle essaya de se jetter hors des fenestres, et prit une epingle, la mettant dans sa bouche, la voulant avaler, disant qu'il faut qu'elle aille en enfer; certainement son esprit est grandement troublé, elle a une telle volonté qu'elle contredit tout ce qu'on lui desire de faire.'

April 14, 1664

'Ma femme devient pire en corps et en esprit, et j'ai peur qu'elle ne devienne encore plus pire en ame, car elle est si opiniâtre qu'elle ne veut pas manger chose aucune, ou faire ce qu'on la supplie, un tant Diable de vouloir a t'elle et une melancholie et jalousie tant profonde. Mais pourquoi suis je fasché, je me blame extremement pour cela, car helas la pauvrette est folle tout à fait, et ne sçauroit qu'y faire, et moi j'en suis tellement affligé que je ne sçai pas quoi faire, ou quelle voye me tourner. . . . J'ai escrit à mon oncle D. de venir ici, a fin de consulter avec d'autres medicins, comme Dr. Ent, ou Pridgeon ou Nurse, ou avec tout, outre lui et Dr. Bates, car je crains beaucoup que ma chere femme est en très grand danger de mourir. Elle a deux nourices qui veillent aupres d'elle nuit et jour, tout cela me coustera bien de l'argent, mais pourtant si cela me

ruine il n'y a point de remede. Mon oncle Gale n'est pas en ville, mais le chevalier Wiseman me conseilla de la mettre dans la maison d'une nommé Lentall, en la rue d'Aldersgate, qui prend des gens comme cela, mais me semble à moi, et à d'autres de mes amis, que ce lieu la est trop scandaleux et deshonorable. Je voudrois bien que ma mère fut ici, et je vous supplie de vous haster a venir ici pour adviser en cet estroit, ce que je dois faire en prudence.'

Lady Hobart is full of pity for the poor husband. 'Truly it has put him in gret Distractions, but now i hop he will bar it beter, senc he sees it can be no beter. For presanc she is removed, & it is so remoet that she can not be hurd to your chamber. We have borded up the wendow & Locked & bared up all saf. In earnis she is in a wors madnes then ever, though not so raving, for now she wil nether drinck, nor tack her fisick, but Ly & bemon hur self. She is falen quit away; her thy is no bigher then Besis arm, & as Limp as can be. At this rate she can not Last. I have set up a bed for Will & Dick in the fals roof very will. Owen Lys at fardings, so we ar all as we ues to be agan. Pray send up if you have it, the spon to put fisick doun hur throt.' 'Now she thincks hur selfe bewiched, & i am one & have an evell ey, but this is not to the purpos. My nat I blis god is very will, & very much your sarvant. I am the worst in the hous, but rub out. I shall chear up when you com.' April 15, 1664

Dr. Denton writes to Sir Ralph, 'Really she

April 14, 1664 growes well towards a sceleton, & if she cannot be brought off from her fooleries, she cannot last longe. . . . I have cut off her haire.'

April 10, 1664 'I am not desirous to come nearer,' writes Sir Ralph, 'unlesse I could do some good, either to her or to you. In this case Phisitians are the best councellours. I pray bee alwaies uppon your Guard, I meane by way of Watchfulnesse, for if she will hurt her selfe in those sad fits, none can bee secure thats with her. I shall pray for her recovery, & that Heaven would direct you in this greate

April 11, 1664 businesse. God bless her & you.' 'Tell me who is about your wife Night and Day, for she must not bee left alone, nor with any that are affrayd of her. I am soe troubled for her, that it puts my Businesse

April 18, 1664 out of my Head.' . . . 'I finde you wish me at London, & were it in the least kinde advantagious to you or your Wife to have me there I would come away at a minutes warning. But since I can doe neither of you two any good, perhapps I may stay heere a few dayes longer, in hopes to heare some better Tydings of her, for the truth is it affects me soe much heere, that I am not very desirous to come nearer, for though she speakes scencibly, & that you thinke she doth not rave, yet I heare she often makes a very noyce, soe that she is heard by the Neighbours, & that must needes encrease the greife of any man that heares it. God direct you for the best. I thinke you may doe well to meet your Mother halfe a mile out of Towne with your coach & carry her to your

Wife presently; I thinke she will take it kindly. She comes upp in Sexton's coach. The House you speake off in Aldersgate St. I doubt is for a meaner sort of people. Tis best to let her owne friendes dispose her, for that will give more satisfaction to all that side, & thats to bee your endeavour, for all your owne friendes are satisfied already.'

At length a ray of hope breaks upon the perplexed husband. He has heard of a woman named Clark, who will undertake to cure his wife in two months for 20*l.*; but he dares not trust his wife to her without having consulted with her uncle Gael. Edmund will not consent to put her in a public institution, or in any house where they would be free to take in other patients; he thinks of taking a private lodging, and observing exactly all that the doctors prescribe for her treatment. Sir Ralph replies:

'I know not what to say to the Woeman more then this, that unlesse her owne friends desire & advise it, twill not bee fit for you to put her to bee cured, for if any ill accident should follow, all the world would blame you for it. I confesse divers Woemen have very good receits, & good successe too, & frequently have cured those that the Drs. have not; but all that will not excuse you from a just censure.'

Lady Hobart writes, 'Your son's wif is very ill uemored still. I am the divell of divells; I sent hur hus in the contry, & she thincks i kep him away all April 21, 1664

day, & thes ar the quarels with me. Thay ar removing hur; god blis hur whar ever she goos. Mrs. Beckerstaf had a dafter, as she is 13 year, & a woman did cuer hur. The woman was hear & dos ax but 20 pound, & dos not desier it till she is cuered. I find the dockers are not wiling to Let it be don that way. She is one of that quality that must not be delt with Lick another, but if she war my child I shold venter hur. But your son has a wolf by the ear.'

'If you come not up quickly,' Pegg writes, 'you will not be in time to dance at Mistress Arabella Hewet's wedding.'

The spring of 1664 was 'a rare season,' Croweshall was in more than its usual beauty, and Doll Leake longed for Sir Ralph 'to smell the sucklins and the stocks & to see the new trees grow.' There is a little Vere now, chasing the butterflies in the prim old garden, the light of her grandmother's eyes, who 'sayes that she owes hir dear Verney a thousand kisses for glofes & ribins' and desires 'her constant service' to him. Lady Gawdy is shocked to hear that her old friend is so much upset by the family troubles that he thinks of going abroad.

May 12, 1664 'You must pardone mee,' she writes, 'if I presume to tell you, that if you forsack your one contry, & should goe by yond sea, you would bee very unjust to your sonne, your selfe, & to all that have the honour to bee related to you. This is a time most proper of all your life to sett at the helme, & to help steere for your famelys good. . . . It is possible the

wisest parsons may faile in there iudgments, when there consernes dus transport, & a foole may chanse to show them the neerest way to there hapines; if I were so blest I should never againe repine at my want of wisdom. I am extremly greved to heare the sad condission of your daughter dus so highly woorke upon you. Deare Sir you have to sattisfie your selfe that never parson in the world has used such a relation more oblegingly, nor passed by all offences so silently as you have. Therefore doe not destroy your selfe by discontent.' May 1664

Sir Ralph assures her that whatever his thoughts may have been he has no present intention to travel, and her obliging letter has convinced him 'that tis not yet fit to be donn.'

Doll Leake is of opinion that 'they take a very ill way with my cossen Verney to send hir to Dr. prijon's; I never heard of any he cured, and hirs is of that natur, that if she wear well, the next thing that crost hir yumer should put hir in it again.' Ap. 27, 1664

'Let not that Doctor yus hir any more so ruffly,' she writes again later. 'I studed hir a littell, & I am much deseved if any Doctor can make a perfect cure in hir. Nothing but death can free hir from that disese, which will be a blesing to hir & to us all. . . . I wish my self with you som times to make you mery, though my yumer is not very gamesom.' May 18, 1664

Mary's health improved, however, beyond expectation, & by the middle of August she was moved to East Claydon accompanied by 'the woman Dr.'

Sir Ralph, who was staying with the Stewkeleys at Preshaw, writes from thence :—

Aug. 24, 1664

'Mun, I very much desire to heare how your Wife is now, & whether she begins to minde her houshold businesse, & ordering her Family. In earnest you must perswade her to it by all the wayes you can & commend her doing of it at all times, & though she doe not doe it well, yet you must commend her for it, & keepe her to it, still; for as her condition is I had rather she should doe it, though she doe it ill, then any body else though they doe it well. Beleeve me though you loose by her doing of it, yet you will gayne ten times as much by it another way; for if she would bee brought to imploy her minde about it, I am confident it would doe her more good then all her Phisick. Let her governe the whole Family, & let her give order for everything in it, & not trust to others doeing of it, but doe it her selfe. And I thinke tis best to get her to keep a house booke, & set downe all thats bought, & cast it upp once a Weeke (every Friday night). She her selfe may cast it upp as often as she pleaseth, but you need doe it but once a Weeke. Be sure you put this on with all your endeavours, for if anything under heaven doe her good, tis imployment, a full & constant imployment. God blesse you both togeather—Your loving father R. V. Tell me if my Brother [Henry] & his Dame [Pen] were with you, & how you came off.'

Aug. 29, 1664

Edmund sends him a cheerful account of their joint doings. 'Ma femme se porte bien, mais ayant

hier beu beaucoup de vin, et mangé du fromagge, elle commencoit au soir a estre un peu detourbée. . . . Je suis d'avis qu'elle mesnagera sa maison tres bien, et qu'elle si addonnera avec le temps. Nous sommes allés, elle et moy seulement, disner chez le Chevalier Pigott, ou elle se deporta extremement bien, devant grande compagnie, nous avons esté aussi chez mon Cousin Dormer, et demain nous irons à Ratcliff.'

The friends who had so patiently borne with Mary in her madness were not forgotten. Edmund sent Lady Hobart's daughter Frank a present of 5*l.*, and 10*l.* to sister Anne. Frank replies: 'I have sent according to your desires the spatula, which I was in hops you would not have used any more. For the mony it came to my hands—I have given the ten pounds to Nan, who returns her humble thanks to you. But for the last it gave me soe great a surprise that it put me strangly out of contenance to receve favours of that nature where I have merited soe little. I can not expresse the joy I have to heare you arrived safe at Claydon, where I wish my poor cousin may have an absolute cure. It shall be my continuall prayer, & in order to her futer repose, let me begge of you to be more kind, for of late you have bine too ruffe. Consider you have your perfect reson; she is deprived of hers, & imput all her errors & indiscretions to her distemper, & bare with them as you have done formerly. There is nothing will be more acceptable to god, nor can any thing render you more considerable to all the world.

And beside, you will quickly lose the great reputation you have goten of being a good husband, which will be a great dishonour to you, & I hope you will be more noble then to trample upon what is in your power. Let not any of her little miscarriages chang the goodness of your natur. Beleve me cousin, it is the great respect I have for you, & the affection I beare to your wiffe maks me take this liberty.'

Lady Hobart could not but rejoice to have her house to herself again, she is looking into every chest & cupboard with severe reflections upon Mary's maidens.

'Bess is the gretis slut I ever had in my lif & now i com to lock up all my things has destroyd me mor then ever any sarvant did, & the basest desembling wench ever cam into any bodys hous.' She is refreshed by a visit to Sir Thomas & Lady Hewytt at Pishobury. 'If you wold tack your coch & com & fech me,' she writes to Sir Ralph, 'you ned not fear your recepson; it will be be yound your mearit. I wish you hear, for in my Lif you never saw mor netnes & clendlynes; & then a willcom with so much fre kindnes as wold winn any creture to admier it. I never was mor plesed in any plas in my Lif.'

She writes to Mun, 'I have a tru Love for you both. She is a very good woman, & if she mends will be consedrabell to you. I hear she locks to hur hous wil, & gros a prety huswif & delights in it. Oysters ar very good, & I know you Love them, so I

have sent you a basket of them.' 'My wife (I praise God) is very hansomly recovered every way,' Edmund replies, '& did fully resolve were she not so very slow (I know not how sure shee may bee), to write unto your Ladiship an epistle of hearty thanks for all your singular & manifold favours whereof you have been so liberall to her & mee both. Indeed they have been so vast, that I cannot imagine how she'lle ever be able to set forth her deepe sence thereof, for I am certain my Witt can never do it for either of us.'

Edmund expresses in every letter his joy in his wife's recovery; both were taking pleasure & interest in their home and its plenishings. Frank Hobart is to send down the curtain rods; Sir Nathaniel is to order a frame for what his wife calls Edmund's 'gibbonish Whimwham;' while Mary despite her slowness contrives to write a number of epistles to Lady Elmes about her special commissions. 'S^{r} Ralph & my cosen Leke both teles me, as you ded before, that gimp is out of fashing; tharfore i shall quit my sellf of the troble by taking your advice to worke a dimity bed in gren cruells. For a drawing-rome i should have 2 squobs, & 6 turned woden chars of the haith of the longe seates. Be pleased to by a tabel & stands of the same coler; & for the same rome a pair of andirons, doges, fire shvl, tongs & thre bras flours with irnes to fasten my glas. I have yet my closet to furnish, & I beg your asistanc in it. I think to hange it with peregon, but the coler, & whether it shall be watered or no i leve to you. If goodnese

might merit honer, thar is none could be greater then dere Aunt Elemes; my self only hapey in being alied to a person so truly vertueus.' Aunt Elmes can find no tolerable chairs under 7*s.* a piece, & the squobs 10*s.*

Sept. 23, 1664 Sir Ralph writes, 'Munn, truly I could wish your Wife might take noe more Phisick at this time, for I finde it much talked off, & to your disadvantage. My Cozen Dormer's Family had been with you this day, but that I told them she was to take her Phisick, soe they say they will come to-morrow. I finde it held absolutly necessary she should not bee alone with servants, espetially such as yours, that make the country ring of them.'

Sept 26, 1663 Three days later his son wrote to Mr. Gael, 'My wife (I thank the Lord) is in very good health every way, & hath already quite left off taking Physick. The Woman is to be gone this weeke, so that now she must be a right house-keeper; & truly (though I say it) I beleeve shee will performe it passing well, for she hath an excellent judgement in the doing of any thing when she is pleased to set her mind to it, which she now begins to do.

Dec. 8, 1664 Mary's improved health was not without relapses; her husband describes her in the beginning of December as 'toujours fantasque.' 'Mun,' writes Sir Ralph, 'I am unwilling you should be soe much alone tis ill both for your Wife & yourselfe too. I am glad the Rogues got not to your Horses you must let Gutridg lie over the Stable. I could now get you

a furious Mastiffe, but tis little and indeed too furious, espetially for you that dwell in a Towne & soe neare the Highway, for this even in the day time will let non come to the House, & had you such a Curr, I would never come to your House, having knowne soe much Mischiefe donn by them. A little yealping Dogg that were watchfull & angry were much more usefull to you, for the Rogues have tricks to quiet Mastiffs, but non can quiet these little Barking currs.'

'To deale freely with you,' he writes a few days later, 'I shall not send you a Furious curst Mastiffe, God knows there is too much of that already. . . . But to be more searious, I am hartily sorry to heare your wife hath been ill of Late, I pray humour her all you can till this publique time is over. God blesse & direct you.'

Edmund was inquiring for a responsible person who could wait upon his wife, and keep up some discipline in a household that sadly needed it. Mary had seen and liked a certain Mistress Felton, but the latter made so many stipulations about her salary of 12*l.*, about the chambermaid that was to work under her, and other matters, that Edmund was not very anxious to have her. Mrs. Felton was not free till the spring, and he specially desired that Mary should be saved fatigue during the Christmas season, when they hoped to celebrate their return home by a series of entertainments to their neighbours.

During the summer of 1663, Mary Eure had

suddenly abandoned her Elizabethan attitude, and given her heart and hand to a Yorkshire squire, William Palmes. Her best friends knew nothing of it, 'My marriage,' as she afterwards wrote to Sir Ralph, 'being for some reasons concealed from almost all my relations.' She had now engaged her old friend Luce Sheppard, to come to her for an expected confinement, and Edmund, who had not forgotten Luce in preparing his Christmas presents, tried to get her to help his wife, before she should be needed by 'Cousin Palmes' in February. Luce was engaged till the New Year, when she hoped to 'ogment his trouble' by coming to wait on him and his lady. Another possible lady housekeeper was the widow of a Mr. Major, with 40*l.* a year of her own, between 40 and 50 years of age, the daughter of a Mr. Crisp, whose house she used to manage; 'so she has had experience, and is as well educated, and as well-born, but less necessitous than Mistress Felton.' Sir Ralph writes, 'I do not know Mrs. Major, but I beleeve her to bee very honest & modest, because all the Brood have been soe. But I must tell you many of them are very slow, & (as we call them) softly persons, & being behinde hand in the world, have not had any Breeding, & if this bee soe she cannot bee fit for your purpose.'

Edmund asks Sir Ralph's help in organising his entertainments: Michel Durand has become head cook. 'J'ai l'intention de commencer mes festins le Mardi après le jour de Noell, c'est pourquoy s'il vous plaist

d'espargner vostre cuisinier je l'useray ce jour là, et le jeudi après et le lundi après cela, mais si vous ne peuvez pas à cause de vostre beuf que vous devez tuer j'attenderay vostre loisir . . . car Micho me dit qu'il sera 2 ou 3 jours à travailler sur vostre bœuf.'

Sir Ralph entered heartily into their hospitable plans. 'Sir Richard Temple tells mee the newes at Buckingham is, that you will keepe the best Christmas in the Sheire, & to that end have bought more frute and spice then halfe the Porters in London can weigh out in a day. I have writ to tell the Cooke that hee shall doe my businesse about the Beefe at such times as you can most conveniently spare him from East Claydon; and soe hee may very well, for hee hath nothing to doe for mee but to make 2 collars of Beefe, & bake some in Potts. I am very glad to heare your Wife is so well, I pray remember mee to her, & tell her I wish her a Merry Christmas.' Plaistow the carrier expects a Christmas Box of 10*s.* for the delivery of letters, which is what he receives at Claydon House. Sir Ralph is anxious that his dogs should go to Sir John Busby to be trained, but Sir John does not think the season favourable. 'For Gamboy and Fleury if they are not entered they will be spoyled, for when they are too old they will not enter so well, & bee so easily corrected for theire faults; you know tis soe with children, & if Sir John Busby bee unwilling, let mee know it, never presse him, for I can send them where they shall be welcome. I pray tell me how Mary-gold lookes.' 'You see

Dec. 22, 1664

what a poore case Sir John Busby had made of Mopsey,' he writes again; 'she looked like one of Pharoah's Leane Kine; on the other side, you keepe them soe fat, that they will burst themselves with running.' The dogs are to be 'constantly hunted.' 'I had much rather you should see it donn, then any man in England, for tis both a healthfull & a gentleman like exercise, my deare Father loved it hartily.'

'Touchant Chiens,' Edmund replies, 'dont deux (c'est à dire) Luther et Calvin sont aussi mechans que ces Arche-Heretiques desquels ils portent les noms, car comme iceux il ne cherchent pas le vrai butin de leur recompence, car ils tuent les innocens Brebis, mais principalement ce vaut-rien Calvin.

Sir Ralph orders that if the 'Whelps meddle with Sheepe, they must be tied to any Dead Sheepe, and whipped soundly, but not beaten with Stickes; tis theire mettle that makes them doe, and such a fault as must bee corrected, and in time too, or else they will be spoyled. I pray let it bee carefully donn.'

He is getting Mun some mulberry trees 'of Mr. Ball of Brentford End,' 'they love a moist ground & will thrive best in it.'

The country is surprised to hear of the 'monstrous sum' of 2,500,000*l.*, granted to the King. Edmund thinks that we might conquer Holland with half that money, 'nous entendons que vous envoyez du Venaison pour conforter les cœurs de nos compatriots.'

Dec. 25, 1664 Sir Ralph explains that 'the 2,500,000*l.* will be raysed by a Land Tax at 70,000*l.* a month for 3 yeares, &

offices must pay. But the Bill is not yet neare perfected soe wee know not what other clauses will be added. Buckinghamshire is raised about 37*l.* per mensem; Middlesex is raised 900*l.* per mensem; & London abated as much. Divers other Counties are either abated or raised as the House thought fit. I never had so ill venison in all my life—one of them is so very bad it will not serve my turne, tis not a warrantable Doe. . . . I have not killed any this season, & this discourages me soe much that I will lessen the stock of Deere, & keep other Cattle amongst them, that will yeeld more profit though lesse pleasure. I am very much joyed to heare your Wife is soe well . . . desire her to be thankful to heaven & careful of her Diet.' A postscript contained the bitter news which had just reached London. 'The Dutch have beat us out of Cape Verde at Guiny, taken the Marchant Shipps, put our men to the sword for resisting them. De Ruiter did it with his Fleet, & tis feared hee will do us mighty mischeifes in the streights.'

The Puritans might put down roast beef and mince pies, and the time-honoured festivities of this season, but naval defeats were not wont to be part of the Christmas fare which they provided for England. Edmund, whose hearty dislike of the Dutch was founded on his intimate personal acquaintance with them, was most indignant, and thought that our reverses in Guinea might have been foreseen and prevented, 'mais cela estant fait, si

Dec. 26, 1664 j'estois digne de conseiller le Roy, je voudrois tascher par tous les moyens du Monde à me venger sur De Ruter, avant son retour; est je ne lui voudrois point donner Cartier, ni à aucun autre Hollandois en aucun lieu de l'Univers . . . et pour moy je suis content de me vendre jusques à la chemise, et puis d'aller en Personne pour punir ces villains de Belge.'

Edmund Denton's widow is ill and something in Mary's condition of mental distress; Dr. Denton has been frightened out of 4 of his 5 senses at a report that her mother Lady Rogers 'who is no better than a Quaker,' is planning a marriage for her with a man 'of noe fortune & of as froward a humour as one would wish . . . the children would be undone as to breeding . . . this is of great concern to the family.' The calamity seems to have been averted, and the children were made wards in chancery. The poor young widow died the following June, 'rather a happiness for her family than a loss.'

Dec. 26, 1664 Edmund Verney wishes Alexander Denton 'here to Xmasse with us, & we would be merrier yet, & shew marveillous Gamball trickes.' Meanwhile the festive preparations were being hurried on; the presence of the Claydon cook ensured the success of the joints and the Plum Porridge; but the drink caused Edmund some anxiety. He flattered himself that he had brewed a good store of strong ale, but he had no common white wine, and his best claret was too good for the occasion; 'trop genereux pour Paisanterie, en sorte que si je scavois ou achetter un

peu de vin de France, a fort bon marché (je ne me souci gueres de la bonté), je l'espanderois ce Noell parmy mes Villains.' Sir Ralph believes that he may get 'Claret of 6 pence a quart . . . & good enough for the use you intend it, and twere pitty to cast away better in that way . . . I will look out some for you . . . twill be ready enough to drinke in two dayes for it shall have no Lees, & you may draw it out of the Runlet without Bottleing it, if you have no time to bottle it.'

Before the wine arrives, this unthrifty host discovers that he does not require it, because the best claret will not keep, and may as well be finished; later he is glad of it again, when the strong ale proves to be no better than it should be.

Mary sends loving messages to Sir Ralph, desiring his blessing, and rejoicing in the prospect of his speedy return to Claydon, where his presence will add to all their Christmas joy.

Her East Claydon tenants were feasted on the 27th, Middle Claydon tenants on another day, and their third and last entertainment was given to 50 of their poorer neighbours with their wives and children.

Wine and ale, good, bad and indifferent, flowed in streams; Edmund reported that the 6^{d} claret had served its purpose well; 'il plaist les gueulles de ces gens, et aide aussi à les enivrer, mais pour mon gout il n'est guère plaisant.'

'Mun, I presume you have ended your Christmas,' writes Sir Ralph on the 5th of January, 'and I hope Jan. 5, 1665

you have not found the charge extraordinary; I dare say a journey either to London or to Oxford for that time would have been much dearer & lesse to your credit. I am heartily glad my Daughter is soe well, I pray you remember me very kindly to her, & desire her to take noe Phisick whilst the Frost holds, but I hope when that's over she will take a little for a day or two, to carry away the reliques of the Plumbe Pyes and Plumbe Porage. I am glad Luce Shepherd comes to keepe her company for she is too much alone.' He had paid civil visits in town to Mary's uncles, Mr. Gael, and Sir Robert Wiseman.

Jan. 9, 1665

Mun writes on the 9th, 'J'ai a cette heure fini mes festins de Noel, mais . . . avec trop grands depens, car cela m'a cousté proche 100*l.*, c'est à dire j'ai despendu 80 livres, la quelle somme est trop pour moi à jetter comme cela, si par la bonté de Dieu je vis jusques à un autre Noel je ne despenderai tant.'

The chief local news is that Edward Challoner has bought Steeple Claydon from his cousin. 'Il a tenu une Court là déjà en son propre nom, et ce matin il s'en est allé vers Gisborough en Yorkshire. La Veuve Busby doit laisser Addington bien tost pour tout de bon.' She is 'much troubled by disputes with her son.' Mistress Abigail was the widow of Robert Busby (Sir Ralph's legal adviser at the time of his sequestration) and daughter of Sir John Gore, knight and alderman of London. She came of a strong-willed family, her husband stood in considerable awe of her,

her younger brother Dick defied the authority of the redoubtable pedagogue at Westminster school, who was his god-father as well as his master, till Dr. Busby 'was a-weary of slashing him.'

Her son, Sir John Busby, Kt., had married Mary Dormer in November 1662, and it was not surprising that after two years' experience of her mother-in-law's rule, the young Lady Busby should wish to be mistress at Addington.

Squire Duncombe's betrothed, whom he had courted so fervently, died of a fever. He also caught it, but having recovered, consoled himself with another Miss Busby, of Hogston, a Roman Catholic; they were married in April, and Sir Ralph's cook dressed their wedding dinner. Miss Butterfield was staying at the White House, and the whole party dined with the Duncombes to meet the Busbys of Addington. 'We keep good fires at Claydon, but none like Squire Duncombe's,' said Mr. Butterfield, and Mun writes of the dinner:—'On dit qu'il a acheté tous les perdris, becasses, becassines et autres volailles de cette Province pour nous entretenir.' The hospitable Squire had lately borrowed 1,000*l.* of Mrs. Abell and Sir Robert Wiseman.

Sir Ralph writes, 'I am glad your troublesome & chargeable time is over, but you are certainly much out of your account, for it could not cost you halfe soe much as you speake of, you making but 3 Invitations & haveing noe Fiddles to draw other company. Dr. Townsend writ word you entertained Jan. 12, 1665

him & Nat Smith very hansomly; and now Uncle Dr. is in the Country you had best goe visit him & get him dine with you.'

Jan. 16, 1665

Edmund replies, 'Mon très cher père, Vous doubtez si mes despens ce Noel peuvent avenir à une telle grande somme, mais sur serieuse consideration d'iceux, il faut que je vous responde (comme les Hollandois font à ceux qui questionent leur compte, contans plus qu'il n'estoit auparavant) que je crois certes qu'il m'a cousté plustost proche de 90*l.* que 80*l.* Nous n'avons pas manqué musique seulement, mais aussi nous avons eu Dançeurs qu'on appelle Morice; et tout cela je ne pouvois remedier pour cette fois.'

Edmund's lavish hospitality had reinstated him in the good opinion of his neighbours; he had been able to increase his estate by one or two judicious purchases, he was at length settling down in his own home, with some prospect of domestic happiness, and as Cousin Jack Fust expressed it, 'you must needs be my Lord of East, West, North and South Claydon.'

CHAPTER III.

SIR RALPH'S RELATIONS.

1661–1665.

'My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.'

THE Restoration suited Colonel Henry Verney exactly; the world was fit once more for a gentleman to live in. He talked valiantly at first of military service, and of commanding 'Viscount Mordaunt's regiment of foot at Windsor,' but hearing that he would be employed in a lower rank than he had held during the Civil War, he found this incompatible with his dignity, and did not press the point. Sir Ralph considers that 'these punctillios are not to be stood uppon by younger brothers, especially at this time when soe very many persons of worth and honour doe rather chuze to take what they can get, then be left out of all imployment,' but he will not offer to advise him.

My Lord of Peterborough and Henry's other noble patrons were in high offices, his father's name was constantly in his mouth. He was magnificent in his offers to procure a peerage for his brother and a baronetage for Dr. Denton, a commission for himself being of course included in the required fees.

'He thinks of nothing but an Irish Viscount, the usual price it seems is £2500, if you will not give him £250 per an. for his life he will take £200.' Unhappily, his relatives were only moved to merriment by the prospect of such honours; but he was more successful in ingratiating himself at Court. His knowledge of horses and dogs, and his keen sporting instincts, ensured him a welcome from the King at Newmarket and other races, he was well known also to the Duke and Duchess of York. Lord Clarendon's affectionate intimacy with Sir Edmund Verney led him to be kind to his sons, and our old friend William Gape, the apothecary and his wife were in attendance upon the Duke and Duchess Anne. Eventually Henry claims a share 'in the moneys given by Act of Parl[t] amongst the truly loyal & indigent officers;' he certifies that he was 'a Lieut. Coll. to Sir Humphrey Bennett's Reg[t] of Horse, hath had a reall command of souldiers according to his commission; that he hath never deserted his Maj[ties] or his blessed Father's service during the late times of Rebellion and Usurpation, & that he hath not a sufficient livelyhood of his own.'

The 'truly loyal & indigent gentlemen' were so many that Henry fared no better than many a nobler Cavalier, but to be loyal and indigent was at least a passport to the best society.

Penelope, whose letters bristle with great names, writes to Sir Ralph of the marriage of Charles Stuart,

Duke of Richmond, to his second wife Margaret Banastre, widow of William Lewis. 'Upon Monday last the Duke was married, upon Tuesday he went out of town & his Duchess for Blechinton, upon Thursday the Duke & my Bro. Harry that went out of town with his Grace, are for Roehamton, the plate is to be run for that day, the Duke puts in for it but tis thought the Duke's horse will lose the match, Bro. H. has betted on the Duke's hors. . . . The Duke was pleased to do my Bro. Harry the honor as to bid him com to his weding, that was carried so privitly that no other parson was invited; but Bro. Harry was so very ill that morning that he could not Attend his honor, att diner time he went to the Duke's own lodging for there he dined very privit, Bro. Harry was so ill that he ris from diner and came home and att night he went agane to attend the Duke att the Duke's lodging, but still kept himself fasting only eating a mess of broth . . . . he is still ill but if he dos hear of a rase that is to be Run, that will carry him all the world over.' Ap. 2, 1662

In June Henry is looking after his young horses at Claydon, whence Mr. Butterfield writes to Mun:— 'Had you seen or heard how Mr. H. V. & Mr. Jo. Risley cheated one the other in the exchange of two admirable jades, with what craft & confidence it was carryed, twould make you intermit a little of your serious thoughts to take a laugh.' Henry is engaged at Christmas time 'to ride with the Duke in person the 6 mile course at Newmarket with a June 9, 1662 Dec. 3, 1662

Nagg of his called Shoulders,' and he is a well-known figure at the various county race-meetings.

Oct. 29, 1663

In October 1663, Penelope's husband, John Denton, died suddenly in London. Cary writes to Sir Ralph, 'I beleve the nuw widdows grife is over before you could come to comfort her. I wish no greater grife may ever come to you or my selfe then that was to Hary & her, and then I am shur wee may well bar it.' 'She is not lik to breack her hart except it bee with joy,' writes Lady Hobart, and Dr. Denton adds, 'You ought to have come thro' thick & thin to have comforted your most consolable sister.' The kind-hearted Mun does his best to regret him. 'Alas my uncle John Denton is dead, I am sorry for't, that's more than some are, altho' he should be of a greater consequence methinkes to them by farr.' Sir Ralph's words to the widow check our uncharitable reflections upon the poor, drunken, boorish Squire. 'And now hee is dead, I shall say nothing of him, nor will you I hope either doe or say more then is decent in such a case; for tho' you have been unhappy in him, yet hee was a Gentleman & your Husband, & twill bee your Honour to conceale his faults. . . . God grant you may make a right use of this deliverance & fit us all for Heaven.' Pen's lady friends remark that 'she has put herself into very handsome mourning, but that she cannot keep within.'

In spite of some plain speaking to her brother, Pen had been a patient and forbearing wife. In the

worst of her troubles she could truly say, 'Had he loved me but near so well as I did, or doe yet love him, the thinges had nevor com to whot they are.'

There had been occasional tiffs between Pen and Henry, he would torment her for loans to be repaid 'when he won his horse-mach;' but they were at heart the best of friends. On John Denton's death they set up house in London together, 'Harry had never been so full of joy,' and Pen, though she called him an old fool, rejoiced in 'his good company' and in her family nickname of 'Harry's Dame.' He would ride down to the races at Quainton, Brackley, and Banstead, or to a cock-fighting at Northampton, bring back his gains to Pen, or explain away his losses, and abuse the town, 'where my stay is like to be but short, for foote it in the dust I cannot, & coach-hire is too dear for my purse.'

All their friends gamble in various ways: 'Mrs. Drake's sister has just gott the best lott in the lottery, the richest sute of hangings there: the King offered more than a 1,000*l* for them, this she had for her 10*l*.'

There was no love lost between Penelope and the Dentons, and Nancy writes to Sir Ralph the following year:—'I know that newes is very axceptabil to pepeol in the cuntry and I have wondarfull newes now, your Dearly beloved sis Denton is like to chous Hary and to marry. It is to one Mr. Wilcocks a Gentelman of Bray; he keps his coch, and he is as propar a man as her Esqre. was, but not altogathar

so handsom and altho' he has a very good reput yet I think he has no more wit then my Lord Jhon if he maris her. He was beloe stars in our hous, and I rund hard & did see him, but Hary has this day caried her out of town down to Stoe. This sarves us for merth very well. Shur if he dus take her he never looked out of the right cornor of his eye, I beleve she has great store of good condisions, for she nevar maid show of any in her life, she has horded them up with her money.'

July 2, 1668 Henry's letters to Sir Ralph are full of minute directions about his horses, they are to have 'the very best grass at Claydon, these are my choicest horses and I dare not trust them for my nephew's usage, nor with noe friend but you. They are as good as can drive in a coach, and as fit for my saddell, and the only horses I have to trust to for Newmarket. The grey's feete are soe badd that noe smith can shoe him without laming him or else I had not putt him to grass. Good brother be careful of them.'

July 13, 1668 Sir Ralph has them 'fleeted in very good grasse at Knowle Hill, Tom King the shepherd is very careful of them, and removes them constantly, but such poor lame Jades in such a surfeited condition will not bee fat in hast.' But the Colonel is far from being satisfied, he will not have his horses tethered. 'Good Brother . . . the worst grass you had had in your lordshipp would a binn better for them att liberty, for your own reason must needs tell you to have surfeited and lame horses tied to a stake, bast-

ing all day in the sunn, cannot bee good for their health. Tis the night's due, scope, fresh water and liberty that must cuer them, it may bee you did conclude them to bee as disorderly as their master, and soe confined them without tryall.'

The long-suffering Sir Ralph agrees to send the greys to another ground, the pasture is far worse, 'but if they will not rest quietly there, rather than suffer them to lead my horses up and down the country (hedges are few and far between) they must be tied againe.' They are to be blooded at intervals of three or four months (even the horses cannot escape the thirst of the age for bleeding), after which they are 'to be corned something more than ordinarie,' to be ready when Henry desires 'to ramble amongst his friends.' He confesses that thanks to Sir Ralph's 'kindness and Mr. W. Tomes' care,' his horses do look very well, he has left them to Sir Ralph's 'good entertainment longer than ordinarie, it was the king's fault and not mine.' 'I saw 3 good matches at Newmarket w^{ch} pleased the king well, but not my worshippe, for I gott no money by them more then my charges. My L^{d} Lovelass lost 600*l.* of his horse, Mr. Elliot won 400*l.* of his, & my L^{d} Sherard near 300*l.* of his nagg.'

Margaret Elmes was having a hard time of it with her cross-grained husband, the small allowance he had given her when they separated was often in arrears, and it was only when Sir Ralph threatened legal proceedings that Sir Thomas would 'protest

upon the word of a gentleman,' that he wished to do all that was fair and honourable, and he would deliver Sir Ralph a lecture which he dared not write to his wife, about the prudence and discretion needed

Dec. 13, 1660

in 'her carriage in the world.' 'As things are with her now, a private life is most for her repute and humiliation, rather than her going to this person and that person, to no purpose to herself but to be laughed behind her back.' He will settle her jointure as soon as his debts are paid to 'Cousin Knightly;' he assures Sir Ralph that there is no hurry, as he never was in better health in his life. 'Elmes is going to fast & pray & soe cannot write to you,' says Uncle Doctor. Matters are not much more advanced at the end of another year. The delay

Sept. 16, 1661

is now caused by 'my cousin Humphry Elmes his death, the old gentleman you see at my chamber, I having been to Henley to see him interred & am just now come up to towne. I have written a kind letter to your sister. . . . were her heart & mine, as yours & mine are in principle it were far better for her. I know I need not write to you to say nothing to the women for you know how captious generally they are. I meane only for your sister's good . . . had I matched into another family I should have been more valewed.' His wife's relations were certainly lacking in appreciation, and Dr. Denton pronounced him to be 'the greatest tyrant in the world.'

Peg naturally wanted something more substantial

than the smothering of her complaints, and Sir Ralph had to write in a severe strain to his brother-in-law :—'Haveinge had soe many Yeares Patience, more then (as a Trustee) I could well answer.' He finds it almost impossible 'to keep them quiet for both of them are colerick & high enough, & have noe great fondness for one another.' Peg, indeed, had freely expressed her opinion, that the life she would lead with him 'is worse than keeping of hogs,' without even the alternative open to the prodigal of returning to his father's house.

The unwearied peacemaker, however, got the husband and wife to meet at Claydon in October with such good effect, that old Aunt Abercromby writing out of her bed (peremptorily to desire Sir Ralph to send her a fat goose 'for All Holland-day, lest wanting that, she should want money all the year') congratulates Nephew Elmes on his 're-nuptials.'

Peg feels that due thanks to Sir Ralph are beyond her reach, but her second honeymoon did not open smoothly. 'The disasters in our jorney to London were soe many & soe great that I know you wolde a laughed sovfitiantly att me, had you but seen them. Our horses tiored as soone as we came out of Chalfont, for theare was noe fresh ones to be had, it was neare eight a clock befoare we got to Lester Hous corner, when we ware in all that fine puddle, we had like to a binn over turned but escaped it, by haveing the coach helde up, while we a lighted in that cleane plaise, & when we ware

Oct. 20, 1661

out, the coachman made shift to drive his coache into sich a plaise as he could not pas through for postes, nether could he put back again, soe we ware forsed to wolke from that Plaise to Covent Garden a fott, & not onely soe, but to take out all that was had in the coache, a longe with us for the coach was likely to stand in the feildes all night. My brother Harry was with us, but the Squir & Martin were gon home a horsback. Hary was loaded like a porter betweene his own things & his dame's.'

They fared better than did some travellers driving on a wintry night. Another letter mentions that 'a hackney coach & horses & a gentleman in it, went back into Fleet Ditch (there were no rails) & was either drowned or smothered in the mud.'

Margaret Elmes was a clever housekeeper, 'Madam Spye-fault,' the doctor called her, which sounds like a character in 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and Sir Ralph often applied to her in domestic perplexities. His pewter vessels are not to his liking. 'For your plaites,' she writes, 'if they are well washed every mealle with woater and brann, soe hott as theare hands can indewar it, and then well rinsed in faire woater, and soe sett one by one, befoare the fire, as they may dry quick, I am confydent they will dry with out spots, for I never knew any sawce staine soe except it bee pickled rabbets, which stand up on the plait a pretty while, soe they will stoaine them

fillthyly . . . this is all the scill I have, which I have set downe att large.' She has made him lemon cakes which he likes, when he has a cold.

The Elmes have been at Claydon again in the winter of 1664–5 and returned with Sir Ralph to London, when Sir Thomas caused quite a commotion by his lamentations over the loss of an 'heirloom,' described as 'a Dial of Glass with a Fly in it,' which had belonged to his family for years and years; he felt sure that his wife had taken this precious treasure to Claydon to hang up in her window, and had left it behind there.

Lady Elmes disclaimed all knowledge of it, but Mun Verney, on receiving his father's commands, went down with a party from East Claydon, and calling upon Mr. Butterfield to bear witness to their exertions, the young people made merry in the old house, going from one empty bedroom to another, finding nothing at all, till in the Orange Chamber Mun exclaimed that he saw 'something like to Flye;' there was an imprisoned Owl in the window lately dead. Amid shouts of laughter, the bird was very carefully packed up in many wrappings, and sent off to Sir Thomas Elmes by Carrier, specially addressed 'to be conveyed to him with great care and speede,' with a mocking letter in which Mun explained that this was all they could find to answer the description of his heirloom, 'I know not what you call it at Greens Norton but here at Claydon wee call it *Owle*. Sir I killed lately just such another sitting on an

Elme, whereby I conjecture there is much sympathy between them,' &c. &c. Unhappily for the success of the jest, Sir Ralph intercepted the parcel, which he thought of suspicious bulk and softness, with the folio sheet of banter, and paid the carrier. 'He is a strange man,' he writes to Mun, '& his hatred to his Wife makes him doe many of these simple things. Certainly hee thinks hee saw a Diall at Claydon, or else hee could not have invented it, but I never remember anything like it in my House.'

Sir Ralph writes to congratulate his sister when her jointure is settled, with a sly hit at her love of London.

'Madame Margery,—Rich, Rich, Rich, now your money is come, but if you are soe simple as to spend it, you shall bee caled by your Old Name, Poore, Silly, Lowsy Megg againe. This very day it came. . . . But I can tell you, that with your money, I had a letter, such a letter, that you will thinke it a good bargayne to give me halfe your Wealth to let you read it, & though my Answere to it is little worth, Yet I know you will bee soe Noble as to give me Two pence for the sight of it. Enough of this till we meet. My Cozen Dorothy Denton is very well (at Hillesden) and Lives, and Lookes (and I am confident Thrives) as well as if she were at London. Mee thinke I heare you sweare this is a Loud Ly, And you will not beleeve it.'

Lady Elmes is quite capable of a retort. 'If we live to meete it is posable I may punish you for the

stile of Maddam Megg, I see it is not good to be to longe from London, the cuntory teaching you sich oulde clownish names, not fitt for sich a spruse widower as y^r^ selfe to name. It is Enuffe to hinder the yonge bewtis from woing you, which I know will grieve you much. The incivilities I receive from Sir Thomas makes me to be all most reconsiled to the name which foremerly I was not very fond of.'

Cary Gardiner still leads as busy a home life as 'souch a train of babs' must entail; good John Stewkeley is proud to see the old nursery filled a second time. 'Here are many white aprons that have long strings,' he writes to Sir Ralph of his five baby girls, '& lusty armes that will pull hard.' His eldest son Will was at 'Winton College,' but the sudden death of Mr. May his tutor there in 1657, caused Mr. Stewkeley to send for him home; he then placed him in London at Dr. Sterne's 'private academy with some ten gentlemen more.' During the Protectorate 'that intelligence given of Oxford by severall freinds that have made a strict inquiry, diverted his father from sending him thither.' At twenty-two he is a worthless beau; Cary talks him over with Brother Stewkeley, 'who is very good to her, though hee will sometimes lett us understand hee is lord over us. I truly love him very much for his care of my children . . . hee & we are both much trobled what will become of Will Stewkeley, who lives above what his

father hathe for himselfe & all the rest; as great A gamster as my brother Hary & as great a rake, & I am confident the sotillest young man in the world, but not the best natured. He is now desirous to by a Court place, so that is next to be sout for, but his mind is so wavouring that I think hee will setill to nothing. Wee A low him 60*l.* a yeare, besides my brother's 10*l.*, & he hath lived on us most of this yeare him selfe, & latly hath taken a man unknown to his father, as all his actions are, & kept 2 horses constantly. I find him a great burden, and I am afrad my brother should work on my husband to let him live thus, or elc to increas his A lowance which hee is not a bill to due without predigisin all the rest.'

Miss Ursula has not obliged her stepmother by marrying, though she is much in company. 'Tis not my patienc only as they all make havock of, for my brother who I think hath some tye on them, crys out most shamfully on them; alas you only know the best of them,' Cary tells Sir Ralph, 'they differ so much from ther father as if he had no relation to them; bot tis none of them can make us unhappy to each other, though ther wayes lessens our Joys yet not our affections, which are absolutely fixed in each other which is amonst all my grifs the reallest comfort as can come to me.'

Cary has taken her own daughter Peg to Daubeney Turberville, an oculist at 'Crick Kerne,' who promises 'to butify her left eye,' but having seen

Cary Verney Lady Gardiner.
from a drawing in Chalks
in the possession of Mrs Jackson.

Cary Gardiner

her he reports it 'to be incurable & their judgments all to be false, that have spent about her, I have hopes strong of her right Eye which labours with four diseases, ill Eyelidds, & falling away of the haire, a spott on the pupill, & a corrupt fistula in the Corner of her Eye towards her nose. . . . I doubt not to save her Eye if you please to give mee time, I shall leave the gratification to your selfe, & my endeavours shall bee as nimble as possible.' He is to begin with 'an incision betweene her eye & nose to be kept open eight or ten weekes,' but he adds 'I shall not in all this time much torture her.' Peg underwent the oculist's treatment with 'much resolution & patienc.' Cary hears 'a good report of him & his birth is very good which maks mee belive hee will perform what he promised.' Peg is always under treatment; after this she consults 'a mounty bank,' and bears her present darkness with hopes of sight,' because she is assured that Prince Rupert gives him a good character.

Cary's boy is at school at his uncle's charge, she has her anxieties about Jack's looks, 'sickness & want of hare are two great blemishes, but I hope time & helth will renuw his favour A gaine, & should I take him homb his littill larning would sure be lost, which would be an inevetabill ruing to him.' Brother Stewkeley's 'humor is to love chang which is the undoing of boys & my boy loves the place very well wher he is, which I commend in him; my brother's humors & extravagant expressions I have

to sadly felt, but I must smother thim all for my children's good.'

Betty and Mr. Adams were still looking out—

Mar. 25, 1663 'Could you but get us A good parsinag I am confident I should live cumfortabielley.' When real troubles failed, which was seldom, Betty had quite a craze for inventing them. Before the birth of her first child she was particularly ingenious; she had secured Sir Ralph as godfather, and she wrote to conjure him to protect her hapless infant, as she foresaw her own death, her husband's second marriage, and the child's sufferings from a cruel stepmother. Sir Ralph declined to pledge himself till the crisis arrived, but he got Peg Elmes to choose some 'Childes Clowtes,' and when the boy had been christened Betty thanks him for a 'silver sugar box & coddel cup.' This child died, and Betty never gave the cruel stepmother a chance, for she survived her husband many years, having brought him a large family of daughters.

Brother Tom is not to be ignored in this review of the family fortunes, though every member of it

June 19, 1663 would gladly have forgotten him if possible. 'There are severall epitaphs,' he writes to Sir Ralph, 'that belong to the word brother' (anticipating by more than a century Mrs. Malaprop's 'nice derangement'), 'as good, deare, hon[red] or the like, and in another (which in some may prove the more proper) sense, unkind, unnatureall or the like. Such strainge and unbeseeming titles I forbeare to stile you with,

though (haply) I have just cause for it.' That there may be no doubt that the right epithets should be applied to himself he winds up his begging letter by subscribing himself, 'Sweet Brother,
Yours most cordially to serve you whilst he is
THO: VERNEY.'

When he has tired out Sir Ralph he approaches Edmund: 'Sir, Kings and Princes in time of need prayeth ayd of their Allies, therefore I conceive it noe dishonour to mee to crave a supply from my relations. Sir, poverty to mee att this instant is as great an enimy as the Turk is to the Emperor of Germany, and doth dayly get advantages of mee. I have (by severall embassies) treated with my brother, who hath promised mee succour but not sufficient to oppose soe powerfull an enimy, which prompts mee to pray your assistance in some handsome manner, that I may be the better strengthened to encounter my approaching foe and abide him battaile.' It might have gone hardly with the Turks, if the Emperor had had Tom's ready wit and fertility of resource.

In '62 he intends going with the Earl of Windsor to Jamaica, in '63 he is developing 'a potash work,' the next spring he turns up in Ireland, and writes from Bandon Bridge to refute 'some scandal that was fomented against mee in my absence. . . . I would stop all clamorous reports if possibly I could, yet letters may miscarry, I am not within 35 miles of any post-town, besides the

Mar. 26 1664

casualty of the sea is to be considered. A friend hath undertaken the conveyance of this to London, that hath correspondency in Cornwall & doth weekly return thither or to Plymouth, hides, tallow & the like.' Soon after this there is 'a flying report that Tom is gone for France,' Mrs. Tom 'is in want enough,' and intends to send the baby, born after his departure, 'eyther to the parish att Bristol or to Sir Ralph.' The poor woman comes to see him at Lady Hobart's, and tells him how much she had been 'injured & abused by her husband already; he hath gotten her portion, & so hath made her utterly unable to help the child or feed herself, having nothing but what her own friends in charity bestow upon her.' These friends press Sir Ralph to pay half Tom's annuity direct to his wife, but he has sold this annuity in advance to Sir John Colladon, of the parish of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, who is also clamouring for payment. Sir Ralph can only desire Tom to take measures 'that hee may rest quiet from these importunities.' Tom is tragically indignant and surprised. 'Sir—had I been the worst of brothers, you could not have more estrainged your affections from mee, give mee (I beseech you) a little liberty to argue the case with you. Sir, is my concealment occasioned by or for reason of any treason, murder or fellony committed against his majesty, or any of his liege people? You cannot but judge me innocent. Was I the first that left my native being for debt? I beleeve I am not,

May 31, 1664

& I am almost confident I shall not be the last. Truly I am not in love with a prison, neither dare I trust the conscience of any man since brother & brother are growne soe cruell one to another. I hope I shall have noe caus to putt your name in the Role of Unkind Brothers.'

He desires Sir Ralph on no account to pay Colladon any money, but in the closely written sheet there is not an allusion to his miserable wife and baby, and in June 'it hath pleased God to take away the childe.' Tom's comment on the news is, that he cannot be compelled to give his wife any of his allowance without 'a long & chargeable sute in Chancery, but I am not easily to be found, & death may take away the one as it hath done the other, before I make a returne homewards, I pray forbeare speaking or writeing to mee concerning the party in any of your letters.' No forbearance can be looked for from Dr. Colladon, whom Tom has treated 'soe very unhandsomely that he has thereby much enraged him.' Sir Ralph cannot bear to be classed, even by Tom, in a Roll of Unkind Brothers, and continues to help him through Mr. Fowke, whom he thanks for his 'many troubles about this unhappy brother of mine.' Tom, on receiving an addition to his quarterage, sends him thanks 'in number numberless,' and quotes Tacitus 'who in his life of Otho sayd, There is not any one thing which persons of courage and quality doe suffer with more regret than that of poverty;' had he been blessed with an

June 24, 1664

estate he would not have slept, till he had repaid all Sir Ralph's benefits. 'Could you but imagine how infinitely I am abused by one that I am informed is a dayly disturber of your quiet, you would rather afford me your pity then your frowne.'

July 10, 1665 'My services to you and yours wishing you all health and happiness, as for any other of my relations let them be as they are:

> 'When cloudy stormes are gone and past,
> Then crums of comfort come att last.'

Tom finds his own peculiar 'crums of comfort' during the Great Plague in the chance 'that it may happily touch his chief creditor Colladon, before it yet leaveth.'

Eliza Verney's letters to Sir Ralph are eminently gentle and reasonable; she has exhausted all her own resources and the help given her by 'her uncle Sir Verney Noell;' she entreats Sir Ralph to persuade her husband to live with her, and to accept some employment which her friends will undertake to find him, or to divide his 200*l.* a year with her, which 'the world cannot say is an unreasonable request.'

Tom is, however, quite scandalized that a deserted wife can permit herself to make such unpleasant suggestions to a man of culture and refinement. Nor does Sir Ralph feel able to interfere on behalf of the poor lady, whose petitions are as troublesome, as her wrongs are indisputable; but as he cannot shake off the claims which such near

kinship and his own kindness impose upon him, Eliza's piteous appeals and Tom's highly moral begging letters, continue to torment him to the end of his life. The more preposterous Tom's request is, the more Scripture he quotes in support of it, and on one occasion he favours Sir Ralph with an essay upon 'The 3 Degrees of Ingratitude that history maketh mention of,' their characteristics and the penalties imposed upon them by the Egyptians and other ancient nations; Death alone being held fit to expiate the third degree, 'that the earth might quickly rot such an execrable creature as it had brought forth.' The due balancing of his sentences gives him never-failing pleasure, he would have supplied invaluable leading articles to a pungent party paper, with a daily demand for cheap abuse of the opposite side. Aug. 30, 1670

Tom remained some years in Ireland with varying fortunes; at one time he is hiding from fresh creditors, hunted by five couple of beagles and 'the pursuers,' but he proves, as he had boasted, 'not easily to be found, to the great charge of my malitious enemies;' then he is in clover again, having 'in travelling towards Limerick, received an invitation from one Sr George Hamilton, whose lady is Sister to y^e^ duke of Ormond, who knew mee (upon his intimate acquaintance with my brother Sr Ed:) at y^e^ first sight of mee, and treated mee far beyond my desert, and withall informed mee of some land Aug. 30, 1670

y^{t} was allotted to my deceased brother for his arrears. Sr George telleth mee it cannot be less worth y^{n} 200*l.* per annum, & advised mee to look after it, which I should gladly doe, provided it be with your good leave and likeing.' 'Sir Daniel Treswell, lately dead, Sir Wm. Flower and Mr. Stephens were the commissioners to allot & sell out Sir Edmund Verney's arrears.'

Sir Ralph will not spend money in investigating Edmund's claims, but if Tom can find any profit accruing for it he shall have a good share. It was not the only occasion that Tom traded on his younger brother's fair fame; a letter of Mary Lloyd's to Dr. Denton describes how he turned up some years later in Chester Cathedral.

Mar. 18, 1675

'Honour'd Uncle,—Sr now I will acquainte you with that as was the greatest of newes to mee: last Sunday being att the quire who did I see but my brother Tom Verney, and could not satisfy my selfe whether I was not mistaken but after long view I found him to be the same; he came from Scotland to a Chester Merchant about some Mynes that he would be a partaker of, and returned on Monday, he is in a good equipage & his man to waite on him, & lookes well and lusty, but the sam Tom V. for a plodding Braine & building Castells in the Ayre; the Gentlemen are very respectfull & oblidging to him, for my Brother S^{r} Edm^{d} was Governor of the Castle, & they honour & respect the name still. My husband presents his humble

services to you, pray accept of the same from her that is S^r^,

Yo^r^ obedient niece & servant to command,

M. Lloyd.'

Whatever time and thought Dr. Denton could spare from his patients, were divided between his girl, who kept the house alive with her merry tongue, and a ponderous theological treatise which years of labour had rendered little less dear to him than Nancy herself. This charming and saucy damsel, though she did not marry till her twenty-fourth year, had had many suitors from childhood. In 1662 her father was in treaty with a Mr. Barker, the settlements on each side promised well, the father was 'in hearty good earnest,' but Doctor feared that 'there was a pad in the straw as to the sow,' and being 'in a great quandary,' he appealed to Sir Ralph having 'no one to consult withall but women.'

Nancy was meanwhile planning a marriage on her own account. Strong in her position as the spoilt child of the family, and absolutely certain of being able to do what she chose with her father and godfather, she received the addresses of a presumptuous Mr. Ford, who, disregarding all the proprieties of the period, had approached her without her father's knowledge. But for once 'Mistress Monkey' was startled to find she had reached the end of her tether. Neither tears nor coaxing were of the least avail, and a good deal alarmed and sobered, Nancy wrote—not unassisted—the following

remarkable epistle to her suitor, a copy of which was kept by the authorities she had defied. The phrase about her father must have been all her own—imagination fails to picture the Doctor with his dry humour and professional calmness, as 'implacably enraged'—Nancy evidently wanted to cover her retreat.

May 19, 1662

'Sir,—As I have been obliged to you for your value, and kindnesse to mee, soe I must begg this farther obligation from you, as to lay a side all thoughts of farther kindnesse, or addresses to mee, for that uppon the presumption of my Fathers greate love for mee, I made it knowne to him. . . . but the truth is, instead of procuring his consent I finde him soe implacably enraged & soe absolutely peremtory in the deniall, that there is noe possibility or hopes, ever soe much as to thinke of it. . . . I am very well assured that if I should bee soe unhappy soe to marry, hee would never give mee any thing of his estate liveing or dying, or ever see my face agayne, and therfore being obliged by the Law of God and nature to him, and my owne happinesse to comply with him in this his resolution, I doe earnestly desire you to thinke noe more of it, for I shall not on any account whatsoever, and soe I rest, Your servant,

ANNIE DENTON.'

In the winter of 1663, a more interesting alliance was arranged for Mistress Nancy with George Nicholas, a younger son of the old Secretary of

State. Sir Edward Nicholas represented the best traditions of the Cavaliers; 'entering official life early, he had risen to its highest grade by proved capacity for business and knowledge of affairs,'[1] and was known 'throughout his whole life,' says Lord Clarendon, 'as a person of very good reputation and of singular integrity.' He was now an old man, and had just retired from 'his great office,' refusing a peerage, but continuing to serve his Majesty on the Privy Council.

Nancy wrote to Sir Ralph in November, craving his support at a difficult crisis of her engagement, 'as for the gentleman you have shued no bitterness against him, I take you for one of my best friends that will keep my father from being angry with me.'

At Christmas time Mrs. Dr. Denton was already busily planning the wedding feast. Was there a fat doe at Claydon, or could one be fatted at short notice? she inquired of Sir Ralph. Margaret Elmes, whose taste and cleverness are universally acknowledged, has come up to Covent Garden, and the ladies 'are now every day mity busy about the wedding clothes, 100*l.* is already gon with them and a considerable som moare will be laid out about them, it cannot be tolorably dun with less.'

Dame Jane Nicholas, to whom Nancy has already lost her heart, pays a ceremonious visit to good vulgar Mrs. Denton. Aunt Isham hears 'that the man is without Excepchon, & that is the thinge

[1] *Nicholas Papers*, publ. Camden Soc. 1886.

I am pleased att for all the forting is loe, one is not always hapye with a greate fortine.' But though the women's part of the business was in so forward a state, there were rumours that the Doctor was yet to satisfy about the settlements.

The Nicholas family suffered severely in the distracted times; the bridegroom's grandfather had been 'plundered thrice in one week;' his uncle, the Dean of Bristol, was turned out of house and home; 'his wife, poor gentlewoman, pitied by all, tho' not holpen by any,' was reduced to sending her only maid into the market-place, 'selling rosemary & bayes to buy bread;' nor did Mr. Secretary Nicholas fare better. Since the Restoration the family fortunes had revived a little; the young Sir John Nicholas held his father's old post of Clerk to the Privy Council, but no large portion could be given to George, the youngest of the three sons. Sir John Nicholas sought an introduction to Sir Ralph from a mutual friend Charles Whitaker, that he might not, on his brother's behalf, 'come solitary in the quality of a stranger, which hee is, purely, to his great unhappinesse.' Sir Edward Nicholas eventually surrendered to his son George the benefit 'of one 4th part of the office of Surveyor Generall of his Majestie's Customs, as well as his estate, title and interest in the parsonage of Wherlwell in the County of Southampton,' and Dr. Denton settled land on his daughter yielding a clear rental of 100*l.* a year. The matter was apparently settled,

Feb. 16, 1664 but on February 16, an agitated note from Nancy

reached her kind old friend. 'If you could posibly for your business com hethar, you wold oblige me mutch, for now my father is as hard to be parswaded to anything as my mother is.' Sir Ralph did not fail her, the marriage took place two days later, and after the honeymoon the bride writes to him in a rapture of gratitude: 'Deare Parant, this titell coms not to you unmerited for I know of no one that has more wright to it then yourselfe. . . . God Almighty reward you for your peas-making betwen fathar & child for next under God you ware the means of it. . . . I shall beg your pardon & ever remain Your dutyfull child & best girlle still,

ANNE NICHOLAS.'

Sir Edward and Lady Nicholas offered bed and board to the young couple for the first months, and Nancy speaks of them with extreme affection. The Doctor is more than reconciled to his son-in-law, and in the autumn they 'are gon to the Fens and so intend for a ramble.' 'My fathar and Nike are both run a wae I think,' Nancy writes to Sir Ralph, 'for they are not com home yet but they have almost destroied your manor of Cladon, & Nobill Soul has uesed them as I hear very kindly.' Her health requires care, and old Aunt Abercromby 'has mounted the gard a fortnight sence. My mother is in ill cais, seing my fathar stais so long a wae, & sais she shall nevar be well, but I hope in that she speaks not truth. The town is empty & barin of newes & I as dull for want of my Nike. . . .

There is a Giant come out of Holond and he is 9 fut hy & 2 inches. I beleve my poor Nike wold stand betwen his legs, he has sutch long ones. . . . I will now tiar you no longer, only ask you an evning blesing, & rest as you shall ever find me your truly loving cosin and best Child.'

In Christmas week both families rejoice over the birth of 'a lusty boy,' christened Denton, who is prosperous, 'even to a mirekell,' according to his mother's account. 'My boy is now undressing by me,' she writes, when the treasure is just able to toddle, 'and is sutch prety companey that he hindars me so, I cannot write what I wold.'

The other children born to George Nicholas and Nancy were, Jane (b. 1666), a son who died an infant in 1670, and John (b. 1674). Denton Nicholas was at Trinity College, Oxford, with the younger Mun Verney; he became a Doctor, and died in 1714. Jane, called after her grandmother Nicholas, was also Sir Ralph's godchild. Nancy writes to thank him for 'making a cristian of my litill girle who I will indevar to make as duty full to you as myselfe am.'

May 10, 1666

Jane's marriage to Sir John Abdy is told in a later chapter; when her daughter was born, nothing would satisfy Lady Abdy but that Sir Ralph should stand sponsor, as he had stood for the baby's mother and grandmother. He was flattered by the request, being wont to boast that his godchildren 'were alwaies the best of the Brood, witnesse Nancy Nicholas.' Dr. Denton lived to be godfather to his

great-grandson, afterwards Sir Robert Abdy. The baronetage, which became extinct in 1759, was revived in the female line, and the present Sir William Abdy is a direct descendant of Dr. Denton's. Nancy's youngest son Jack had Bishop Patrick for his godfather; he was educated at Harrow, took Holy Orders in 1701, married in 1706 'the dau. of Parson Dod,' and left a son George.

These grandchildren and great-grandchildren were the joy of the Doctor's old age, and after his wife's death in 1675 the Nicholases made their home with him in Covent Garden.

Mistress Nancy's popularity was gauged rather enviously by other matrons, by the amount of venison she received in presents. 'I dar say,' one lady remarks, 'fue as has parkes of ther one, has so much spent in ther house as my Cossen Nicholas eats, for as she tells me, she eats it as others eat beaf, three tims A week, baked, boyled, rosted and potted.' Sir Ralph sends her snipes and larks. 'My Nike,' she writes, 'was y^{t} afternoon gone to bed wth a cold and the exstrordinary goodnes of ye fouls tempted him up again to supper. . . . I never did see firmer or fresher or fatter.'

She is delightfully young as a mother and grandmother, and expects to go everywhere and to see everything. 'Nancy hath beene at the Tower,' the old Doctor writes on one of these occasions, '& was afraid when she saw the men in armour, & durst not see the Lyons.'

But to return to the year 1664, Nancy's marriage being off his mind, the Doctor gave himself up with keen relish to his defence of Protestant opinions, and this same year his 'Horæ Subsecivæ' was published. He thus sets forth his intentions—'A sad fate attends both him that writes and him that writes not. He that Prints exposeth himself to be wounded by others, and he that forbears to Speak or Print in the cause of God, provokes God to disown him.' The doctor has persuaded himself that in a century of controversy, the 'just defence of England against Rome, the Innocency of our Princes and their Government and of the Protestant religion, has never yet been particularly handled in any particular Tract that ever yet I could see and hear of, which I hope may excuse me A tanto if not A toto.' Arming himself with a goodly store of biblical texts and classical quotations, the doctor descended into the dusty arena and laid about him with vigour, belabouring Popes, Cardinals and Councils, 'rightly expounding things generally misunderstood,' and in the heat of the fray losing the sense of humour, the delicate irony and the felicity of expression which make his private letters so delightful. He continued to prescribe for 'Ecclesiastics of all Perswasions,' to purge out heresies, and to devise for weak faith a robust tonic, feeling no scruple in dogmatising about the soul's ailments, though he had often confessed to the difficulty of treating those of the body.

In the beginning of 1665 Dorothy Leeke's health began to fail. She was one of the unmarried women who are the good angels of a whole family. Her warm heart, her unaffected piety, and her cheerful spirits, unbroken by poverty and dependence, made her welcome in every household.

Lady Gawdy treated her as a sister, and whenever she could be spared from Croweshall, she was overwhelmed with invitations from friends and cousins, but divided her time chiefly between Chancery Lane and Claydon. She never lost an opportunity of serving Sir Ralph, and when Sir Charles Gawdy sends over a groom to Claydon, he is sure to have a merry letter from Doll in his wallet. 'Dear Sir Ralph,' she writes on one of these occasions, 'you beleve your self now at liberty & fre from all troublesome parsons, but this is to let you see that you ought not to be very Confident of any thing in this world, for in all places I shall find you out to torment you, yet my thoughts are so free from malis, that I wish this may only hinder you of a quater of an hower slep in the Evining; not when you are in your park amoungst your prety dear, Nancy atinding you; nor in your fine wood & walks, for ther I will a low you to think of the last beauty you saw at Loundon. By this time I beleve you wish to come to the bisnis that caused this leter, but to tell you the truth I have none, nor anything more to say, but that I could be contented to be in Sir Charlses boy's plac the time he is

at Cladon, if you wold admit me into the parlur, but then or hear I can never be other then your most faithfull servant to Comand.'

Edmund welcomed her very cordially at East Claydon, where she took Luce Shepperd's place in helping Mary with her housekeeping, and in encouraging her to occupy herself in various directions.

At the White House she is to 'lay over the Hall because the inward room is so convenient for her Maid,' 'dans la chambre sur la sale, mais non pas dans une sale chambre,' Mun writes; 'she eats no flesh on Fridays nor willingly on Wednesdays in Lent.' Mary is hard at work embroidering the hangings for a big green bed; Doll busies herself with sorting silks and crewels; she sends patterns to Sir Ralph and Lady Elmes to be matched in London, and helps Mary with the intricacies of the 'rosemary stitch.' Mary likes her task very well, but Doll considers 'ther is too much work in it, and ther is sertan birds and flyes and other crepers which I know not, and frute which I do not much like, but it is a very fine thing, tho they be Left out. Gamboy, Marigold and Vaunter [Sir Ralph's hounds] made us a visit which was all the strangers we had.'

In the midst of her unselfish ministrations, this kind woman first began to suspect the real nature of the 'dangerous corroding disease' from which she was suffering. The shock and the increasing

pain upset her for the time, the more so as 'Doctor's physicke' failed entirely to check its progress, but she rallied bravely from her depression, kept her sufferings to herself as far as might be, and as the year wore on, private anxieties were merged in a great public calamity.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PLAGUE AND THE FIRE.

1665–1666.

'Things are in the saddle
And ride Mankind.'

THE plague so often referred to in the earlier Verney letters had been for many years in abeyance. 'During the Civil Wars London had been the safest place of residence & had grown fast while other towns were languishing.'

At first the fresh outbreak in the spring of 1665 is noticed merely in joke:—'Tis plaguey newes that the plague has come to Southwark.' In May Sir Ralph writes from Chancery Lane: 'Tis an ill time to put out money for the feare of the Plague makes many willing to take their Estates out of the Goldsmiths' hands, & the King's greate want of money makes many very unwilling to lend any money to these that advance greate summs for him. I know some friends that have 1000*l.* & 1500*l.* a peece that they cannot dispose of; M^r^ Kempe came to my Lodging on purpose to desire mee to helpe him to

May 18, 1665

dispose 3 or 400*l.* on good security. . . . Coals are not only excessive deare, but are not to be had, wee heare of a hope for greate Fleets hereafter, but we doubt tis but discourse.' He is thankful to have the Claydon woods to fall back upon, and must cut down more timber than he desires. It is a hot and dry season, and Mun is to see that the young mulberry trees are well watered. He complains to Sir R. Mauleverer that 'Rents were never soe hard to get in, the noyse that the Bill against bringing in foreine Cattle is not like to passe the House of Lords makes all our markets at a Stand, soe that Cowes are dayly sould for 10, 13 & 15 shillings a peece, as in former yeares were wont to yeeld four or five times as much money, & this great deadnesse of Trade forces me to borrow for my owne occations.'

The plague is spreading; in June 'tis suspected to bee at the Black Swan in Holborn where the Alisbery & other coaches stand;' a little later all the carriers are stopped, 'the sickness is not far from Lombard St. & if it should visitt the Goldsmiths twill be hazardous to have too great a stock there.' Sir Roger Burgoyne, whose children are at Clapham, is afraid either to leave them there, or to have them home lest they bring down infection; but eventually they return to Warwickshire, Sir Ralph entertaining them by the way; Sir Roger has received them 'safe & sound, but so full of the good dainties that Claydon afforded, that the best we have at Wroxall will hardly goe down with them.'

Aunt Isham exhorts Sir Ralph while he is in town

June 19, 1665 'to ware a quill as is filed up with quicsilver and sealed up with hard waxe & soed up in a silke thinge with a string to ware about your neck, this is as sartine as any thinge is to keep one from taking of the Plage if one is in the house with them . . . iff you let your Horse ware it about his head he will never have the desese. This is a slite bisnes if itt does presarve one from this sad desese, as the Lady Bemone tells me she hath worn it herselfe & intends to have some for all her sarvants, & Sir Tho: Bemone hunted with his nabores Hounes as thare Horses ware infected & his horse nevor choed [showed] the desese . . . heare is talkes of one as came from London within 5 miles is dead of a swelling

June 27, 1665 under his yeare.' 'The quicksilver must be corked up fust & then seled, itt tis nitty for one's teth & eies, so without one is in danger one would not ware itt.' She recommends him to have 'Lente figges in a readines if any of your family shoulge have a swelling, Rost some & Mashe them togeather & then mix some Meatreadat[1] amonst them nothing will soner brake & hele a sore then this, so thay keepe them selves warme.'

She has also a cure for the falling sickness given her by 'Lady Shinjane as a thing as never failed. Take the misseltoe wh^{ch} growes sometimes upon the top, & sometimes among the branches of an old

[1] Mithridate mustard, *Phlaspe arvense.*

oake tree, dry it & beat it to powder & Give as much of it as will lye upon a sixpence, 3 mornings together.'

Cary Gardiner has her nostrum, 'a blak meddicin' so potent she would certainly cure the plague could she get enough of it. The official remedy is Garlic with butter and a clove or two; and for 'the richer sort,' the Coll: of Physicians prescribe a costly concoction of 'Powder of hartshorn, pearls, coral, tormentil, hyacinth-stone, onyx-stone & East Hunicorne's horn.'

Hampshire is much infected; the Duke of York's children are at Wilton, and expect him to join them there.

The men of Sir Ralph's generation still considered smoking a nasty habit, and Sir Roger Burgoyne, in planning a new wing at Wroxall, designs a door into the Oval Garden 'to make it serve instead of a withdrawing room for tobacconists & such good-fellows & to free the house from all such unwellcome parfumes.' But it was rapidly becoming fashionable, as a preservative against infection, and the Eton boys were ordered to smoke in school daily.

Sir Ralph has to confess 'the Sicknesse is strangely increased & that several houses are shut upp in Chancery lane & severall neare it, but I trust God in Mercy will preserve mee & this family from that violent disease. I have been ill of late, soe that the Dr. hath purged & blooded me, & now

I hope to get home within few days.' Hospitable as he is, he is disinclined to share his home with some relations for an indefinite period, which rouses Penelope and Henry to wrath. She protests that she would be content with 'a thached hous in your town.' 'If you had had but a sparke of love for me,' he writes, 'you would not a putt these greate inconveniences on mee . . . all people are so feare-full of the sickness that they will recive non, much less people thay know not. If my sister Gardiner considers not our condition noe better then you have don, then I shall enter your house on our returne & putt a redd cross on the dore and write & cry Lord a marcy on us.' Henry's 'errand' is said to be to a cocking at Northampton. London became more and more deserted as the summer advanced, Evelyn going to the City on business was 'environ'd with multitudes of poor pestiferous creatures begging alms, the shops universally shut up, a dreadful prospect.'

July 4, 1665

Lady Elmes, always nervous about health, has fled to Scarborough and thence to Knaresborough Spa, in company with the Ishams, the Sherards and 'my shee-cousin Danby.' She writes to her brother: 'The first inst we arived att the nasty Spaw, and have now began to drinke the horid sulfer watter, which all thowgh as bad as is posable to be im-majaned, yet in my judgment plesant, to all the doings we have within doorse, the house and all that is in it being horidly nasty and crowded up with all

June 4, 665

sorte of company, which we Eate with in a roome as the spiders are redy to drope into my mouthe, and sure hathe nethor been well cleaned nor ared this doseuen yerese, it makes me much moare sicke then the nasty water. Did you but see me you wolde laughe hartily att me but I say little of it to whot I thinke, then to mend all this, the goe to supper att halfe an ower after six, soe I save a bitt and supp bye myselfe 2 owers after them, which is the plesantest thinge I doe heare. We are 16 of my uncle and aunts family, and all in pention, att 10*s.* a weeke for owerselves, and 7*s.* for owr servants with lodgens in; I have not hard from you I know not when, soe in my openyone live heare as if theare ware nobody Elce in the worlde, but just whot I see of these bumkins. We met the Lady Comton and her sister the Lady Ann Comton att Donkister, hoe asured me the blackimorse head in Chancery laine was shutt up of the plaige.' The health resorts leave much to be desired. Lodgings at Astropp Wells which Lady Elmes also visited were as objectionable: 'instead of the sweet woodbines and jesamine att Claydon, I have the stincke of sower whay & cheese, which is so strong in my chamber I know not whot to doe . . . not a coale of fyer can I get to burne one smale bitt of perfewme, fast I must the night, heare not being athor master or maide att home, candle there is not a bit, soe I have sent to borrow one.'

The accommodation at Buxton seems to have been

no better, the gentry who went to drink the waters 'were crowded into low wooden sheds & regaled with oatcake & with a viand which the hosts called mutton, but which the guests strongly suspected to be dog.'[1]

June 5, 1665

Sir Ralph had been meditating how to give his sister 'some imployment at Knarsborough-Spa, and can finde out none but to search for Haire to make me Wiggs & buy your coach full, if you can, for all sorts of comodities are cheape in Yorksheire & generally very good too . . . Peg Gardner saw your Lord & Master with some gentlemen in the Parke, where I doubt not your company was much desired. I am told Sir John Dynham's Lady & fine Mrs. Middleton are sworne the Queene's Dressers, if it be soe, she hath six, had you been heare perhaps you might have been the 7th . . . Give my Aunt humble thanks for her letter [inviting Sir Ralph to join them], truly now you are with her, I thought one of the Brood had been enough at a time, but if the waters make her soe well as to support Two, twill bee a very greate recovery, that gives both strength to her, & happinesse to me.' Peg can hear of no hair at any barber's; she writes from York, lodgings are dearer than in London, 'this town doth almost swarme, ther being soldiers, soe men we want not . . . nethor my aunt nor selfe have had any violent paine in our heads so I hope the waters have dun us good, but

[1] Macaulay's *Hist.* i. 346.

now we are beginning our gretist punnishments which is our phesicke.' Sir Ralph is glad she is 'in soe good company at Yorke for it seems there is greate store of gentlemen there, and we know you ladies love them, noe lesse then we doe the ladies. . . . I beleeve you have had abundance of Cherries, Reygrasse & all such kinde of Dainties; much good may they doe you, but I pray eate sparingly.' June 19, 1665

Aunt Isham writes from Stapleford, my Lord Sherard's house, 'We are as merry heare as one can be so far from London & the Lady Sherard with myself hath beaten one Lady Beamon out of the Pitt att ha'penny Gleeke you may think how itt hath weared me play this small game.'

The rest of the party are at Thorpe with Margaret Danby.[1] Her married life does not seem to have been a happy one, her husband suffered from the masterful temper against which her mother used to rebel, and she was constantly at war with her sister and Mr. Palmes. Lady Elmes complains to Sir Ralph that when she reached their house 'the Chiefe Bird was flone 2 dayes befoare, he knowing of our coming, his brother and sister he tooke away with him, soe lefte none heare but the childeren, his wife being with us most of the time we have been in these parts. This showse whot good well umored creturs you men are. . . . This plaise will cost me somthing, heare being a man Cooke, butler and all ofisers ansorable.' July 18, 1665

[1] See vol. iii. p. 323.

Peg went home with Mrs. Sherard to Whitsondine, passing through York. No inns were considered safe in the plague time, and 'to lye att Gentlemens Houses as we go, will cost me I know not whot,' writes this not very liberal lady. Mrs. Sherard is said to look seven years younger after her course of waters.

Betty Adams contributes her tale of the plague in Essex; Chelmsford is much to be feared because of the many 'hecklers' that come thither from town, 'my Cusan Pascal saies when aney great sicknes is at London it is yousaley ther, it is all redy much visited with the smol pox, that desese has much rained in this Contri since I cam hether, my next nebors dau^r^ died of it . . . our carier has left going to London, but the post I thinck goes still.'

Aug. 27, 1665

In August, Buckingham 'is soe sorely afflicted with Small Pox, suspected to be worse for there are blew spots with it,' that Sir Ralph is advised to trade only with Bicester Market; Edmund cannot deal with his butcher at Winslow because the butcher's servant Hogson comes from an infected house; Squire Duncombe 'pensa mourir ce matin, et cette après diner il alla au Cabaret se boire bien.' Hogson's sister dies, and the plague spreads to their relations at East Claydon, where Edward Cox and all his children die of it, the wife alone recovering, and falling ill later, after the birth of her posthumous child, of what is again supposed to be the plague. Edmund remains at his post, and Sir Ralph returns

to Claydon as soon as the plague breaks out, that they may do what they can for the villages; the plague does not spread in the Claydons, but through that terrible September when the mortality in London reached its highest point, there were cases at Stow, Stony Stratford, Fenny Stratford (where the market was closed and the highway diverted), Bletchley, Lavendon (where fifty died in the village), Winslow, Hardwick, Aylesbury, Wendover, Marlow, Wickham, etc. A wandering dog was said to have carried the plague from Wendover to Ellesborough, where the Rector Thomas Emery died of it. A pest-house was set up in the fields outside Aylesbury, whose wretched inmates burnt 'the sheep-racks & gates' of the adjoining farm, being forbidden to wander in search of fuel. The Aylesbury Gaol, 'so decayed that it was scarce fit for a dog-house,' had long been a notorious centre of infection; at this time it was full of miserable Quakers and Non-conformists who had been thrust into it, in the persecution following the Act of Uniformity.

Men hardly dared to leave their homes for fear of bringing 'the sickness' back with them. Thomas Stafford speaks 'of the sad confinement of all fathers of families in this time of contagion.' In Hampshire, Cary deplores the fate of a poor family three miles from her own door, where the plague was brought down by a brother from London, and all died of it; for two months past there have been fifty deaths a week in Southampton.

Court, Parliament, and the Law fled to Oxford; the Chancellor with my Lord Manchester are taking
Sept. 12, 1665 orders for the King's accommodation there. Sir Nathaniel Hobart writes to Sir Ralph :—'If the Plague continue at the rate I feare it will, what a madnes would it bee to have such a confluence of people as the Terme must bring into such a place as Oxford, but in regard we are uncertaine what will bee resolvde on by them that sit at the Sterne, our humble request is that you will bee pleased to use your interest to procure us lodgings, a lower and an upper chamber would bee sufficient. I confess D^r^ Townsend (who is sanguine) has w^th^ some confidence undertaken to get us some accomodation, but I dow not rely upon him and to say truth S^r^ Raph Verneys indeavours (since I have had the honor to be ownd by him) have ever bin prefered before the assurances of any other, S^r^ if they can be had neere the Schooles where they say the Court will bee kept it will bee the better but beggars must bee noe chusers.'

Lady Hobart is ready to disregard all sanitary considerations if she can but be with her 'Nat.'
Sept. 12, 1665 'There goo non but my husband self and Mayd and man and it may be my boy. One rom for us and a plas for my hus to sit in, but tou roms shall sarve all we will mack shift . . . my son dislicks that the new Colag shall send to ofer him logins for he will mack no requist to them . . . my husband writ a leter to docker Bate to see if he cold help him, but my son says the toun Logins are so dear that thar

is no deling with them. I hop we shall see you to morow or the next day for I have no pashans to be so long from you, I wold be glad to have a lon rom for my husband any shall content us.'

Sir Ralph lays the case before his Oxford friends. The Principal of Brasenose, Dr. Yate, hospitably responds.

Sept. 21, 1665

Sir,—' I have had Sr Nath. Hobart's name in my list, ever since mr Cary told me your desires for him, and I hope I shalbe able to serve him as you desire, with a lodging chamber and another chamber below staires, if those that now take upon them all power here doe not attempt to doe more then hithertoo they have done, Mr Attorney Gen: lies in my lodgings, and hath desired me to provide for his two sonnes, (one or both members of Parliament) some where also in our Coll: I have designed where to lodge Sr Nath. and I hope I shall hold it, I will not easily be beaten off, though I had a ticket this morning from my Lord Chancellor's Secretary to desire I would provide for 4 knightes but I hope it is but a thing he assumes, and that it is not by my Lord's Command. But be assured I will use all the power and friendes I have, but I will have a lodging such as you desire for him, but what his servantes will doe I cannot at present tell you, though I will thinke my selfe obliged to do all I can in some place or other to fitt them also. Wee heare the Duke of Yorke wilbe here to morrow, his children came on Thursday last, and though some cariages of the kinges

are come already to Christ Church, wee are not assured the king wilbe here on Tuesday next, but most say that Ev^g^ he wilbe here. The great trouble Sr Nath. Hobart wilbe put into wilbe for his diet in a Colledge if his lady comes along with him: otherwise those that are members of the House have names in the Booke, and dine and sup in our Hall, wch they seeme to be pleased with, but wherein I may serve them therein also I shall, and if Sr Nath. Hobart could give me notice 2 or 3 dayes before his coming I might be enabled to serve him the better, that he might not be to seeke when he comes, as many maybe, (for the Court hath so enlarged themselves having Christ Church, Merton Coll: Corpus Xti Coll. Pembroke Coll. & Oriol Coll. assigned wholely and solely for them) that it putts many to straites and many to seeke, for if I provide for S^r^ Nath (as I hope to do) in our Coll. I must remove a fellow and some furniture and they must have some tyme to doe it. I heare my Lo: Chancelo^r^ wilbe here on Munday, and in all likelyhood mr Cary may be here then also and wee will joyne all our force together to serve you. My Wife presentes her most humble service and thankes to you, and will not be wanting in any thing shee is able to serve you herein. And I take this as a favour from you that you will comand Sr Your very humble Servant.

THO: YATE.

Sir Nathaniel writes—'For my diet I shall be glad to eat in the Hall if that may bee allowed, for

my wife, though she would be glad to eat with the Dr's wife, and her mayde at her servants table, yet least that should be an inconvenience to her, she saies (and you know she can shift) she will do it privately in her chamber.'

'I have sent you both this weeks gazettes,' he writes again, 'and have nothing to add but a comicall incounter betwixt my lord of Lyncolne and Secretary Maurice at the Secretaries owne table, the dispute grew about the Antiquity of the two Universities. My Lord of Lincolne (as he had reason) was for Cambridge, Mr Sec: for Oxford, Sir Robert Wiseman who was present protested he thought they would have gone to Cuffs, certainly it would have bin an excellent decision of that great controversy had they engagde and Cambridge in all likelihood had got the Victory for my Lord, who you know is a little out of temper by fitts, would have made madd worke with my little Statesman. I shall now leave you to your Gazettes in to w^h^ I thought this narrative noe improper introduction.' Nov. 24, 1665

Mrs. Sherard writes from Whitsondine:—'I am in a daily fere, we had a market town about 4 miles of us that bureyed about 9 or 10 in a hut, just as I cam ought of the North, and wee hoped all would have bin well, but about 3 wickes since it brake out in that town affresh and non knows how it cam. A child of 3 years old dyed first, and 5 more since in that same hous, and it was in one hous more which sold all sortes of ale; he conselid his Oct. 8, 1665

dead wife tow dayes, and ther was 40 in the hous after shee dyed both Jhentry and others, my L^d^ Sherard told me that non in his hundred coold say thay wair free, & severall of that town stole into our town & brought in ther Goodes in the night. My hus. hearing of it armd himselfe with his pistoles & went about 9 at night & saw them all shut up with thos as resived them; it is a great blesing that all plasis air not infeckted considoring the carlysness of the common sort of people.' Six months later the plague is still in 'the market town' and likely to last through another summer, 'the town being full of poore & very unruly.'

Sir Justiman Isham is driven from home, the sickness being all round his house in Northamptonshire.

Betty's fears are confirmed:—'The sickness is at Chelmsford [in October] a litel mile from me which coseis me to be veri fearfull, so many of our town goes that way to Markit, thos which bee shut up would run About did not sum stand with guns redy to shoot them if they stur.' By December there are 50 houses infected; she is the 'joyful mother of a fin girl,' thankful for her recovery 'in times when wee hardly dare visit one another if sick.' As soon as she can sit up in her bed she writes to Sir Ralph a list of benefices he might apply for. As Tom had found balm in the thought that creditors were not plague-proof; and Jeffereys, a lad in his teens, profiting by the havoc the plague had wrought

among the lawyers, 'put a gown on his back & began to plead,' before he had been called to the bar; so Betty reading with some complacency of the 'many ministers dead in thees times of Mortolity,' thinks it strange indeed if her brother cannot get them one of the vacant livings; 'the taxis here is so hi & the plas so smol that we know not whot to doo, this with my praiers to God for our hapy meeting I rest that am

'Y^r^ most affec^t^ Sister & sarvant E. ADAMS.'

Oxford, crowded as it is in every corner, is not exempt—'the porter of Lincoln is dead of the plague,' and other cases are mentioned, the Bishop of Salisbury, the saintly Dr. Earle, is dying in University College, but of what illness does not appear.

Dr. Yate continues to be overdone with guests; in November Major Salway is coming to the College. The Hobarts seem to have found lodgings in the town as poor Doll Leeke is with them. Sir Ralph sends her a bed and bedding from Claydon; and a warming-pan wrapped up in a feather bed, is to arrive on horseback. Sir Roger Burgoyne writes of a 'man of miracles, the 7^th^ brother who opens the eyes of those that have been blind many yeares, and cures cancers in breast which he seldom failes in,' but Doll is happily left in peace; she gets 'some ingredients for a dyet drink from Mr. Gape, and some frog water from Oxford.'

Doll returns to her niece, Lady Smith's house at Radcliffe in November; she is still well enough to

Nov. 8, 1665 write to Sir Ralph:—'I thank God I got very well home but weary and much worst then when I went, my pains are like to increas every day, I pray I may get pacienc to induer and that my time may not be long. . . . I have 3 score of suger for you but can get no basket to put it in. Sir, so long as I have ability you shall have a very faithful servant of your D. Leeke.' A week later she writes again, Sir W. Smith 'would drive me over to Claydon but I grow every day more unfit for such a Jorney . . . . all that I shall beg of you or any of my friends is to pray for me that it will pleas God to make me fit for him, the great blessing I can expect is to dy, O that I wear so happy that the time wear come, but I must wait his Leasure that must mak me fit for it.' In

Dec. 2, 1665 December Sir Ralph writes of 'my deare Cozen Leeke' to Lady Gawdy who is tenderly anxious about her—'though she walkes about the house, yet I may say many and greate Paines and a lingering Death with a thousand other inconveniences are visible uppon her. . . . I beleeve she conceales the worst from you, well knowing how sensible your Ladyshipp would bee of her distresses.'

Sir Ralph and Edmund rode over constantly from Claydon, and were on the watch to devise any possible alleviations. Lady Hobart came down again from town:—'I would render my life to do her good, never any Sister had such a Los as she will be to me.' Dr. Denton visits her at intervals and we always see a crowd of people round her; Mun goes over with a

party just before Christmas, 'pour ce qui touche ma surpassante Cousine Leake, ma plume ne peut vous racontez sans larmes ceque mes yeux on vu, une ame si pure et si sainte dans un corps tellement corrompu.' Dec. 20, 1665

A few days later Mun rides over again to Radcliffe and returns by moonlight, deeply impressed with the 'magnanimity & truly Christian patience' with which the sufferer bears herself. Sir Ralph is at Wroxall where Sir Roger had promised to use him like a friend; 'Hempen sheets, Bull Beefe & the worst room in my house shall be all at your service, my wife will provide the softest cushions she can get for your lean bones, I know you love an easy seat as well as hard fare.' He has hurt his shin and tries to 'favour it' having found 'that rest is a great advantage to it,' but he is far too active to be prudent long, and Doll is asking daily for his return. Sir Ralph does not think her end to be so near as Lady Hobart does; 'this terrible disease commonly takes time & leasure in its execution. You see the Queen Mother of France lives still, though her very Doctors have oft expected her departure.' Mr. Butterfield finds 'Mistress Leake wearing a pace but not so fast as she desires.' Peg Elmes hopes 'God may comfort her & keep us from the like,' and deplores in the same breath the death of Sir Ralph's ass, whose milk she designed to share with him. She is staying with Sir Thomas Cave at Stanford, paying for her diet. Lady Cave dies in February, and there is instantly Jan. 15, 1666

a panic in the country that it is 'the plague, or
Feb. 10, 1666 spotted fever at the best.' Lady Elmes and Arabella Denton have nursed her to the last, and Sir Thomas gives them mourning. Sir Ralph says that malignant fevers are always worse in a time of plague, and advises his Sister 'to finde out some private place to air yourself a little to take off all apprehension' before coming to Claydon, though it seems that the illness is 'only Scarlet Fever.' 'The Plague is newly brake out againe at Quainton & 2 more dead of it already this week . . . I pray bee not affrayd, for feare brings many diseases.' Doll signs a paper on the 14th of February leaving her little savings to her
Feb. 22, 1666 sister, and on the 22nd Sir Ralph, just starting for the Assizes, writes a hurried line to Henry:—'My deare Cozen Leake is gon to Heaven, & is, & will bee very much missed by all that knew her.' 'As fit for Heaven as Cousin Leake' became the family phrase in describing a good woman.

Lady Elmes remains at Stanford helping Sir Thomas Cave with his motherless children, 'he is continewally a weeping as if it were all most the first day he had lost his lady;' she cannot but contrast his conduct with that of her own Sir Thomas, 'who is displeased att my being here, & trewly I am confident will bee soe with all I doe or where ere I am, till he heares I am in my grave, which newse I hope in God he shall not have a longe time.' Sir Greville Verney is staying in the house, on the occasion of one of her visits, 'I cannot say he courts

any here, so as to make me thinke he will make his choyse here,' she writes to Sir Ralph, 'tho' he doth make a party color Cortshipp to one moare then the rest; which you men are not much to be minded for.'

Pepys could rejoice with the opening of the New Year at the plague's decrease in town, shops were opening, porters bowing and beggars begging and staring to see a nobleman's coach come to town again; but in many parts of the country the sickness was still raging. In June, 1666, Cary writes that Winchester was 'never near so bad as now, ther died 11 in one day, for all the town is emptied so much into the countary a bout; poor Milly the pretty made as sarved my daugter Grove is shut up and her husband and 3 children, last tusday her made dying of the plaug, so my littell scolar is like to continue with mee who presents his humble sarvis to you tis a sad los of time to him. In Southampton, I thinke, have died almost 1000.'

Winton College remains closed for above half a year; 'so that for that time,' writes John Stewkeley, 'I have been Jack's Tutor; after Xmas the school opens again, if the sickness doe not breake out again which is much feared, by reason that one fell down dead there last week, as he was going to grinde mault.'

The bad news of the war with the Dutch contributes to the general depression:—'Hear is nothing bot sending soulgars to sea,' Cary writes, 'and lend- June 15, 1666

ing mony to the King, and I wish wee ware in so good a condistion as that wee could doe it as will as others to sarve the King. . . . I pray God send us a hapy peace or elc I feare you with y^r^ grassing, and I am sure us with our farming shall bee in a sad condistion espetially our weeke fortune theis times must crosh very much.'

In July there are riots amongst the plague-stricken wretches who are shut up in their houses;

July 23, 1666 the plague is still 'so violent in Winton and Petersfeld and Porchmouth as tis sad to relate, and last week the sick brok out, not for want, as wee are told, but to visitt the houses of the better sort and opened the jale and 17 prisoners escaped, bot 15 are taken againe, the royal white trained bands ware left in town and soprist thim with the lose of one man and 3 hort, of that party as did mutiny, wee are afrad of all wee meet, thay ramble a bout . . . our assises is kept next wensday at Andovour so the Sherrif is come into this sickly countary how long to stay I know not, I pray God send peac and helth.'

Aug. 13, 1666 In August 'Winton is as bad as evar considering the small nomber remaining in it and so is Petersfeild, bot Porchmouth though many sick in it tis not now so mortall, wee take the same way in this countary as you due by a weeckly tax, and so wee did last yeare besids what is sent in by privet gentlemen which hath bin very considerable tho' all to littell for wee heare thay are in want still.' 'We have had a year of scarcity.'

A more terrible blow than any that had yet fallen was to 'crush the weak fortunes' of the Stewkeleys, and of many other members of the family, whose incomes were derived chiefly from London property. Lady Hobart in her beautiful house in Chancery Lane, writes in an agony of fear, while the Great Fire is blazing, and fresh tidings of its ravages come hourly to swell the noise and panic in the streets.

'O dear Sir Raph,—I am sory to be the mesinger of so dismall news, for por London is almost burnt down. It began on Saterday night, [she is writing on Monday] & has burnt ever senc and is at this tim more fears [fierce] then ever, it did begin in pudding lan at a backers, whar a Duch rog [rogue] lay, & burnt to the bridge & all fish street and all crasus stret & Lumber Stret and the old exchang & canan stret & so all that way to the reaver & bilingsgat sid, & now tis com to chep sid & banescasell [Baynard's Castle to the east of Blackfriars Bridge] & tis thought flet stret will be burnt by tomorow, thar is nothing left in any hous thar, nor in the Tempell, thar was never so sad a sight, nor so dolefull a cry hard, my hart is not abell to expres the tenth nay the thousenth part of it, thar is all the carts within ten mils round, & cars & drays run about night & day, & thousens of men & women carring burdens. Tis the Duch fire, thar was one tacken in Westminster seting his outhous on fier & thay have atempted to fier many plases & thar is a bundanc

Sept. 3, 1666

tacken with granades & pouder, Casell yard was set on fier, i am all most out of my wits, we have packed up all our goods & cannot get a cart for money, thay give 5 & 10 pound for carts. I have sent for carts to my Lady Glaskock if I can get them, but I fear I shall los all I have and must run away. O pray for us for now the crys macks me I know what to say, O pety me. I will breck open the closet and look to all your things as well as i can, I hop if it com to us it will be Thursday but it runs fearsly, O i shall los all i have, we have sent to se for carts to send to higat [Highgate] & cannot get one (for) twenty pound to go out of town. Viner and Backwall have saved all, and so has all Lumbert Stret, all Polschurchyard cloth is saved. Mr. Glaskock is com & says we shall have carts tomorrow. God bles us & send us a good meting & beleve I am yours for ever

'A. H.

'September the 3. ten aclock.'

Sept. 5, 1666

Two days later she writes again, 'O dear Sir, we are all undon, the holl sety is down, my hous is not yet burnt, but all I have turn'd out, & som saf & the rest in the felds.' Among the distracting rumours in the crowd a report ran that the French and Dutch who had planned the fire would sack the town, and with this 'dreadful outcry we did look to be kiled every hour, I have all most lost my wits & my por gearls. It has cost me 20*l*. to remove my goods

in porters & carts if you can sen me som money you will hyly obleg me, you shall have it again at Micklmas dear sir send me but 10*l.* & love & pety y^{r} Ser^{t} A. H.'

Lady Hobart has lost her wits in good company, the Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Bludworth, running about 'with a handkercher about his neck, cried out like a fainting woman to the king's message—Lord what can I do, I am spent, people will not obey me, I have been pulling down houses but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it!' It was evident if the fire did not reach Chancery Lane 'before Thursday' it would not be thanks to the City Magnate, who, flurried and worn out by the unwonted exertion of running about all night, had gone home 'to refresh himself,' leaving London to burn. The violence with which the fire spread 'bred a kind of Distraction and stupidity in the Inhabitants and neighbourhood near it.' The pipes had been destroyed in a few hours, and the water-supply, such as it was, failed entirely. Men were clamouring for Monk, but he was out of town the first days, and the fire was even more hasty and unreasonable to deal with than Saints and Levellers. 'Negligence,' says an old chronicler, 'turned into a Confusion, Consternation & despair, People chusing rather by flight to save their own goods, than by a vigorous opposition to save their houses & the whole City.'

Friends wrote at first to tell each other what streets were burned down; then they count up 'those

Sept. 6, 1666

that are yet standing.' Dr. Denton writes on the 6th. 'Clothworkers' Hall is now on fire but in a fair way of being stopped. Justice Godfrey behaved himself so well at the Temple, that the King would have knighted him, but he refused it, so the King has ordered a piece of plate of 50*l.* for him with his arms upon it & with Exdono &c.' 'Whether this will find you or noe I know not because I know not where the carrier doth inne, the fire being now come as far as Holborn Bridge or near it. The short account of the fire is that more than the whole city is in ashes, wherein W. Gape & my selfe have great shares in St. Sythes Lane, and in Salisbury Court in reversion & I & wife in possession, & to render our condition more deplorable, the depopulation is soe vast that it cannot afford us a livelihood so that I want the advice of all my friends to advise what I had best doe. Our persons I thank God & our moveables are saved but at a vast charge . . . 4*l.* for every load to Kensington. The frendes in Chancery Lane are safe, but the fire was neare them behind the Rowles where it gott a great check soe that we hope it is stopt, I think they are still in towne. We had sent away all but my bookes soe that we were fayne to ly only on blanketts. It came so far as to burn the King's Bench office & the Alienation Office, but not so far as Nelly's chambers. Our Navy lies at St. Ellen's point & the Dutch on the Coast of Bretaigne. This fire stops all trade & traffique & posts, the sad consequences of which may easily be ghessed att.

Since I writ this the fire broke out at the Temple again next to Nelly's Chambers, & his chamber the Duke caused to be blown up & it hath burnt now the Inner Temple Hall & I have not heard how much further. . . . I give you many thanks for your invitation, but at present am in such a distraction that I know not how to make use of it, we are neyther safe here nor you there, for it is generally beleeved, but not at court, that the Papists have designed this & more, many & strong presumptions there are for it, as gunpowder, & balls & wildfire taken about many of them, that if they destroy them there are more left behind to doe the business; send them to Whitehall they are all dismissed. Here nothing almost is to be gott that we have not in possession, bread, bear, meat, all in scarcity & many want it. The fire broke out vehemently again last night about Shoe Lane, & as we ghesse about Cripple Gate, but we ghesse by the smoke that it is well-laid againe. I wish 2 or 3 trunks with you, but they are at Kensington & I know not how to convey them. . . . Just now Dick Parker is come from the Temple & saies that the Temple Hall is safe & only Tanfield Court burnt & the Church is safe. Harry went to looke for the Carrier without my privity, soe I am goinge myselfe to find him, for I dare not send a man out of doors for feare of being pressed to work att the fier, James & Jack were both pressed this morning.'

'The very very sad misfortune of poor London is

Sept. 8, 1666 an unexspressable troble to us all,' writes Lady Elmes from Stanford, 'sure soe sad a sight was nevor seen be foare as that sitty is now lying in ashes, besides the unimmajanable loos the hole kingdom receives buy it.' Her own things have suffered much by being moved, and those who have paid heavily for having their goods carried out into the fields, are half provoked when the fire stops short of their houses. Aunt Isham is terrified at the stories that reach her 'that there is dayly taking of Men, & some in Woman Clothes with fier bals.'

Sir Nathaniel Hobart, when the panic is abating, feels that after all they have had 'no great share in
Sept. 7, 1666 this calamity otherwise than as it becomes christians to have a fellow-feeling for one another's miseries, yet the image of this terrible judgment has made such an impression in the soules of every one of us, that it will not be effaced while we live.' They are unable to accept Sir Ralph's hospitality, 'for the Term approaches & Parlament claims our attendance. We have the same apprehensions of future tumults, but we are in the storm & must ride it out, besides I must keep to my calling, for that you know keeps me. The Duke of Albemarle came this night to towne, happily if he had bin heere before the Towne might have bin saved, but God was not pleased, & we must submit to his will.' Lady Hobart adds 'when you com to us you will not know whar you ar,' so completely had the old familiar land-

marks disappeared. Houses are at a premium, and the fire was hardly quenched when his landlord warned Sir Nathaniel out of his house, 'but I am in possession & intend God willing to keep it. . . . I told my wife what he would doe & so was not deceived, as soone as he shall seale a lease of Ejectment I will put in a bill in Chancery & get an injunction . . . he is a person so odious that if his cause were just he would hardly find favour. The King has forbidden any building till the Parliament sitts, the rebuilding of the Citty will not bee soe difficult as the satisfying all interests, there being so many proprietors. The great streights the Citizens are in, will not bring them to this end of the Towne. The Exchange is kept at Gresham College.' Sept. 13, 1666

Dr. Denton is much exercised, the City is a desert, the physicians who practised there are flocking westward, where they find so many more of their craft bereft of patients, that they fear they shall be reduced to bleeding one another. Dr. Denton resolves, however, to bide his time '& try how practice will come in,' his wife has lost houses that brought her in 86*l.* per an., 'and now she hath had a little time to recollect herselfe, she cryes all day longe. I shall take what care I can off her, but all in my power cannot make it good to her.' By the irony of fate a deluge of water in the Fens was as destructive to his property there, as the want of it had proved in town; but the pious Doctor 'thanks

God for what is left, it pleases Him that we should live in a continual dependance on him, & I hope we shall do.'

A surveyor's report sent to Sir Ralph states that the fire burnt from 1 or 2 A.M. on the 2nd of September until the 6th, consuming 373 acres within the City walls and 63 acres 3 roods without the walls; 89 parish churches besides chapels, & 13,200 houses were destroyed. Aunt Isham writes of a hurricane near Lincoln in which the wind blew 50 houses over with 'Hay-ricks, Corn-ricks & all trees; hailstones fell as big as half-crownes & the inside was like to Butter vele & one had little things like maggets, thes be great Judments, the Lord make every one of us mend one.' After describing the desolate look of the country with all the trees by the roots, she says, it was 'as naked a place as the Citie of London,' a surprising expression until the date reminds us that the letter was written by an eye-witness a month after the fire.

Sept. 26, 1666

Cary is 'so trobled at the sad nuse of the distrocktion of Londone that I could not rit . . . you know it was all my sone had to depend on and my girls, so you may esely immagine my consarn, ther is bot one house left of 18 pound a yeare of all that nomber.' John Stewkeley writes later:—'In that sad & universall loss wee had no small share, but a patient resignation to his will that sent it, is the best mitigation wee can think of, either in that or other disappointments or crosses that your sister & I

have undergone since wee mett together, which are all lessen'd I thank God, by our mutuall affection & injoying one of another & our young branches.' They were not idle words. Mun wrote of Stewkeley in his old age, 'He is so gay in his humour that he appears at least 7 years younger then his son Jack & at least once & Twenty then his son Will,' whose 'gravity & reservedness' were of an unattractive quality. A family subscription is got up to rebuild Nelly Denton's chambers in the Temple, but the confusion left by the fire affects all trades down to the smallest; Sir Ralph can scarcely find a Cradle for an expected arrival at the White House, 'such things being very deare now, as all their stores are burnt.' Had the fire reached the wig-makers, that a change of fashion was announced that autumn? Moll Gape informs her country cousins that 'all fals locks & foretops are left off, nothing but our owne haire worne now by women, but men will not bee brought to itt as yet.' 'Builders & tenants are to seek,' and by the autumn of 1667, 'ground goes even a begging, & there is soe much to be sold that it becomes every day cheaper than the other;' even when tenants are found to build, they will pay no rent 'till Christmas come twelvemonth,' and 'Stewkeley must e'en be content with the loss that dreadful fire brings on him.'

CHAPTER V.

JOHN VERNEY AT ALEPPO.

1662–1674.

'Learn with the ant in summer to provide;
Drive with the bee the drone without the hive;
Build like the swallow in the summer tide;
Spare not too much, my son, but sparing thrive.'

We left John Verney in 1662, preparing to take up with high hope and courage his post in the factory at Aleppo. The working partners of the firm were Gabriel Roberts in London, to whom John is still apprenticed; and, at Aleppo, his brother William Roberts, and John Sheppard (related to Jack's old instructress Luce), a distant cousin of the Verneys.

Sir Thomas Bludworth, now remembered only as the panic-stricken Lord Mayor of burning London, and as father-in-law of Judge Jeffries, supplied the capital, together with Mr. Richard Spencer, Mr. Thomas Lewis, Mr. Sam Dashwood, and Mr. Jos. Hamond. 'Sir Thomas Bludworth is the great trader of them all and sends generally above twice as much as any of the rest, though Mr. Lewis is as rich as any.' The factory consists of some fifty Englishmen, among whom is 'cozen Dick Fust,' brother of Jack's school-

chum, and another Buckinghamshire youth, brother to Sir Thomas Lee of Hartwell.

The English factories were known collectively as 'the nation,' there was an English Consul at Aleppo who had 'pre-eminence of all other Christian Consuls Resident,' and a Vice-consul at Scanderoon. The Levant Company sent out a chaplain 'for the instruction of our people in knowledge of religion, and in reproving and rebuking whatsoever shall deserve reproof or admonition;' a commission which when too literally interpreted caused 'discontent and disagreement between our Factors and our Chaplain' to the great surprise of the Company.

At least one distinguished Oxford man held the post of chaplain at Aleppo for eleven years—Dr. Robert Huntington, a learned Hebrew scholar, who enriched the Merton and Bodleian libraries with Eastern books; but as John Verney returned home soon after Huntington's appointment, there is no evidence of their having met.

The Beaumaris merchant and ship-captain Lewis Roberts (father of Gabriel and William) has left an account of the city and its commerce as he knew them a few years earlier. 'Aleppo,' he says, 'called in 2 Sam: 8. 3. Aram Zobah, is now the most famous city in all the grand Seignior's dominions, for the confluence of merchants of all nations. It is pleasantly seated upon a plain, in the midst whereof doth rise a small hill whereupon is built a strong castle that commands the whole city. It hath in it

many Khans for lodgings, and warehouses which resemble small forts, being shut with iron gates, to defend the merchants and their goods from wrong. Their streets are shut with doors every night at each end in the manner of Cairo, and thereby each street becomes defensible by itself.' The chief exports, he tells us, are 'Cotton and Cotton Wools, Galls for Dyers, Aniseeds, Cordovants, Wax, Grogram, Yarns, Chamlets, Carpets, Gems from India, Spices from Arabia, Mohairs & Raw Silks brought overland from Persia, and Goatshair.' The Company's ships brought in return the famous English cloth from Suffolk, Essex and Gloucester; kerseys from Yorkshire and Hampshire; English lead and tin, and Indian spices and indigo which had first gone to London by the Cape.

There was great variation of climate. 'We lye in the open air in summer,' writes John, 'on the tops of our houses, and are often troubled with little flyes which sting our hands and faces;' and for the cold in winter he wants 'Wash-leather gloves to write in.' They rejoice when 'frosty and snowy weather' comes in October, because it kills the locusts.

The most pressing item in Jack's 'Note of Necessarys' is 'a Grey Beaver Hatt not too high crownd nor sharp crownd but Broad brimmd . . . for hats of £3. 10*s*., or £4., are sold for £7. 10., and as this, so all other necessarys, few or none weare any but beavers here to save charges, for one good hatt will last a man 6 or 7 yeares in this factory.'

His wants are generously supplied from home. Edmund sends him 'strings of all sorts for the Lyro Violl in 2 round black boxes to the value of 20*s.*, besides 5 bridges which cost ½ a crowne; also a crimson velvet saddle with a cover for it,' and a complete set of horse trappings; 'all as good as could be got for money.' If John 'can light upon a well-tempered Turkish or Persian Scymeterre or Battle Axe, or Persian Bowe & Arrowes or such like Toyes,' Edmund would like to have them, and 'if the prices be too great for a younger brother to beare' he will repay him. He also desires to have 'some silke waskots & shirts of the sort of linnen made where you are, a Turkish habit from head to foot, but not of cloth, because that's too common here. Let all be neate & hansome, the Turbant cheifly. I am bigger & taler something then you, therefore bespeake it accordingly.' The letters are seasoned with brotherly advice; 'though your calling be not such as I did wish you, yet since it was your choice, swerve not therefrom, but withal remember you are a gentleman, and show yourselfe on all occasions to be a man of worth and courage.'

But John was not long in discovering that something besides merit was needed to push his fortunes. His prospects were anything but brilliant. There was already a race amongst European nations for the commerce of the East. France was bringing cloth into the market, in combination with Spain, calling it Drap de Londres, and marking it, as was said,

with the names of English makers; and the Dutch were as unscrupulous in their rivalry.

'Our Ambassador at Constantinople,' Mun writes,
May 1663 'and the rest of our Nation had like to have been trounced by the Grand Signior, and all this by a Holland Plott, to destroy the English trading in those parts, for a man of warr of theirs went into the Redd Sea, and hung up English colours, and took all he could rap and ring from the Turkes wch incensed their Emperor highly, but by good fortune all was timely discovered so there was an end.' The Turkish Government itself was breaking treaties and ignoring pledges, as it has continued to do ever
Jan. 16, 1666 since. 'Mr. Robert Frampton, the Rev: minister at this Factory,' is going to London to inform the Turkey Co. of these things. 'Our Intrigues now are with the greatest Courtiers of this Empire, And notwithstanding our Embassador's power we are likely to be foiled.'

The foreign competition and Turkish misrule which affected the general prosperity of 'the nation,' were, however, less injurious to Jack than rivalries within the factory. Each man in it was playing for his own hand, and using any influence he could command in England to have 'the ventures' sent out to his own name, rather than to the firm. Mr. Roberts and Mr. Sheppard viewed John with jealousy as a coming partner, and the only commission allowed him was upon goods which Mr. Gabriel Roberts sent out.

This was not what Sir Ralph had been led to expect, when he paid a heavy premium for his son, and consented to so protracted a separation. Jack's chances now lay in the interest his father could make for him in England, and in the money he could send him, with which to make his own bargains.

John was not a youth to sit still under disappointment. While he complained bitterly of the small profits of the work, he carried it on with his usual ability and diligence. He scrupulously kept to every rule of the company, allowed himself no 'immoderate or unseasonable recreation nor suffered his business ever to be performed by others.' He thus succeeded in gaining 'Cozen Sheppard's' respect and good will; he would blush to repeat to his father 'those hearty expressions and praises' which Sheppard gave him in his report to Gabriel Roberts.

There was an occasional press of business, but it was on the whole a monotonous life, varied by the hundred miles' ride to Scanderoon, when John went down to meet an incoming ship, or to superintend the dispatch of the precious bales, brought down by trains of camels to the sea. A ship's captain or a traveller with news from home was a welcome guest at the factory, and in the midst of the exciting changes that followed the Restoration, the young men laid bets on the fate of the fallen. 'Pray sir, when you honour me with a letter,' writes Jack to his father, 'advise me whether Sir Henry Vane by his death saved his estate or noe, or whether his

heirs injoy a half of it, I having a wager of £30. to my £3. of it.'

In the spring of 1663 Jack had a welcome distraction: 'On occasion presented in an idle time to goe to the Holy Land, halfe the factory did doe it, and among them myself.' Dick Fust wrote home that John had started 'with about 20 more Englishmen on the 19th of March, he took shipping in an English bottom for Joppa, and from thence to Jerusalem intending to be back in May.' Dick very earnestly begged his father 'to furnish him to see the place also . . . it being the custom for most of our Englishmen that stay any time at Aleppo to see Jerusalem.' A relic of John's journey still exists at Claydon, in a parchment signed and sealed by 'Frater Bernardus Betuel . . . Custodiæ Terræ Sanctæ Vicarius' to testify that he had duly visited all the Holy Places.

Sir Ralph hears that 'Mr. Nightingale, the great factor at Aleppo, is coming to England suddenly,
Dec. 11, 1663 Mr. Sheppard may be the next Grandee.' Jack warns his father not to send out money except through Mr. Gabriel Roberts. 'Mr. Fane (who dwells in our house) hath been nipt, his Father Sir Francis, gave 700*l.* to a merchant to be sent hither . . . but by that time the shipp sett sayle the merchant broke, a scurvy misfortune for a younger brother. I have received the periwig you sent me, and it fitts very well, but I have not had any occasion of one since its arrivall, my owne haire

(which is extraordinary thick and curling) being now long enough without.'

He sends home a small sack of melon seeds by his father's request, but he cannot get any choice kinds, 'for in this country among these heathens none are known, here they are not worth 12d a million.' Later he is able to get some special melon seeds 'of Mesopotamia, where they grow in the sands of the river Euphrates after the fall of the winter overflowings, they are here much more esteemed than the mellons of this country. . . . Sir Thomas Lee of Hartwell hath some of the same sent him from hence.'

Five years go by of protracted negotiations; 'there are not three in the nation that spend so little,' yet John finds he shall be 'but upon a balance.' He cannot bear to trouble his father with 'craving petitions,' but he has times of depression when it is hard not to fancy himself forgotten.

In the summer of 1667 he has been two and a half years without news, though he gives repeated and minute directions about his address. Letters are to be sent 'via Marselia' and to be given in 'on a post night at the Outland post-house in the Poultry, London,' unless sent by private hand, but every way their delivery is most uncertain. Lady Elmes hears 'strainge stories of the Jewse & amunge the rest that theare is 400 Profits at Alepoe, sure Jack will turne one, or att least wise send some newse of them.' Jack takes no interest in the prophets

March 24, 1666

and is pre-occupied with the alarming accounts that had reached Aleppo 'of the late dreadful mortality in England;' he had been ill himself most of the previous winter, and he longed wearily 'for the very great comfort' of a letter from his father 'to be certified of your and my Relations health.' 'By this Ship Robert, I have ordered to be laden a Bagg of Excellent Pistaches for my Brother, but she is so little a ship it was with great difficulty I gott Mr. Nightingale, with whom you are acquainted, to promise me they should be taken.'

Feb. 20, 1666

His position has not improved: 'Mr. William Roberts' pride & a stubborne will of ruleing' has made him refuse every scheme proposed to give John a larger share in the profits. He does not depend on the 'trade in shipping & Grosse goods . . . he hath all the yeare long great sums of money either from Constantinople, Leghorn, or Venice.' John is entirely dependent upon what his old master can do for him, 'who if God should take from this world I must return home, for a farthing more I should not gett in this Country unlesse I had a good considerable estate of my owne to improve.' He hoped that Mun's marriage would enable him to invest 1,000*l.* for which John could get him a good return. When at last a budget of home letters reaches him, he is delighted to hear of the birth of an heir at East Claydon, but his father shows him that no capital is to be hoped for from thence.

At length, in March 1668, John's patience is rewarded. Gabriel Roberts, 'the only friend on whom his hopes depend in a mercantile way,' has arranged that he shall enter into partnership with Sheppard, he having four sevenths and John three sevenths of the profits. By great economy John has just paid his way, and has kept whatever money his father has been able to send him 'entire' as capital to trade with.

The father and brother at Claydon are equally unhappy at the long gaps in the correspondence; two at least of John's letters miscarried; and Sir Ralph wrote in anger, which was really anxiety, about his son's neglect. John is grieved to the heart, he apologises and explains 'pray in your next casheer these clouds by your act of oblivion for former manquement.' . . . 'Last June,' he writes, Jan. 18, 1669
'going to Scanderoon about business & staying there only 5 days I cacht—or rather Scanderoon disease catcht me—& continued upon me for 3 months, changing the collour of my flesh to that yellownesse, which is customary for that desease, & seldom ever after alters, though, thanks be to God, I am not only perfectly cured but have the same complexion I had before.'

The year 1669 promised fair, John was full of eagerness to improve his new partnership, when an overwhelming calamity fell upon Aleppo. Those narrow streets with their teeming population were ravaged by the plague for four months. John could

Aug. 5, 1669 write in August that it was 'now nere over, but it hath swept away in this city 150,000 people, besides it hath raged in all the towns and villages about us. Most of our Nation fledd, 6 of us only remained here, of which 2 died of the infection. I was out of town a few dayes to despatch some business at Scanderoon, nere which place died Sir Thos. Lee's brother of the Plague. I was in the tent with him, till the day before he died, not till then imagining he had that disease. I escaped yet more narrowly another who went out of Aleppo with me, & had the Plague on him. We did not only travell, Eat & Drinke but lay together, 2 dayes before he died, which was under my Tent, I began to mistrust him and left him when in bedd together. Of the Plague and that rascally Scanderoon desease which seldom proves less mortall, are dead 7 of our Factory this summer, which is twice as many as has died ever since I came here.'

Sept. 9, 1669 The next month John writes sadly:—'We have buried 5 more of our Nation, one fourth of the Factory are this summer dead, & most of the living have been sicke, among which I was a sharer for about 25 dayes . . . my respects to those of my relations that have not forgotten me.'

The winter season finds him more cheerful, and able to think once more of his father's love of gardening. 'I send you a little sack of Berryes of a Jan. 30, 1670 tree of these parts that groweth not in England. Its leaves are of an admirable green. The Blossoms

(which smell rarely) of as good a Blew or darkish Skye collour. Its groth is to the bignesse of an Elme nere upon, it beareth nothing but these berryes which drop off in the winter, & are not of any knowne goodnesse, that its only a delightfull tree to looke on. If it will growe in our country I cannot but thinke it worth the having, if so be only for its rarity. 2 years since I sent you some seeds, if they produce good mellons I'le get you more from Mesopotamia whence I brought those, which though they are incomparably good, yet in 2 or 3 years groth in other parts change soe much, that they differ little from Cowcombers, as English Peas are worth nothing if every year we sow not those that come from Christendom for to sett them that grow here though their original be English, & but of two years planting, yet are they not worth the gathering, such difference there is between the soyles of Countryes.'

He spent a month in Cyprus in 1670, on the business of the Company. The following spring he wrote to his father to introduce to him 'one Thomas Rowland a ship Chirurgeon, who while he was at Aleppo favoured me with his good company in my house. He is Buckinghamshire born which adds to the respect I bear any Englishman. It's soe long since I heard from you that I begin to despaire of having the happinesse you formerly granted me by your dear letters. It is all one charge whether they consist of a whole or a quarter of a sheet of paper.'

Mar. 25, 1671

He makes a despairing appeal to Mun for tidings. 'I doe desire to robb you of one mornings pleasure or buisnesse, and to confine you to your Closet, there on a sheet or two of paper to muster up an accompt of all my relations, who and to whom any are marryed, what increase there is of our kindsfolke and what decrease by death; this with what enlargement you think fitting . . . I assure you will be very wellcome to one who of so many relations . . . in eight yeares time hath heard but of three or foure.' While John was eating his heart out with hope deferred, the packet of home letters which he longed for had left Claydon many months previously, and had been returned again from Syria unopened. It should have reached him the summer of the great plague, when there could have been but little intercourse between the ships and the stricken city. We know not what hindered its delivery; the packet dated June 26, 1670, found its way back to Claydon, where, strange to say, it remained with unbroken seal for 200 years. Sir Harry Verney's second son George (Colonel Lloyd-Verney) found it when cataloguing some old letters. It was solemnly opened in full family conclave on October 20, 1865, when the Claydon news was read at last which John had so pined to hear.

His own letters fared little better. He found one mail still at Scanderoon which he had despatched two months before: 'Our ships do not dare to depart for fear of 4 dogereens who lay at

Cyprus threatening them.' The next packet sent by a French ship never reached Marseilles, being taken 'by the Tunisseens.' From August '68 to November '71 he has not heard from his father, and he fears that 'long absence and new kindred might in any other less generous spirit than yours cause love to faint and turn into remembrance only.' But John's place had never been filled at home. His Aunt, Cary Gardiner, writes 'Dear Nevegh, About All-Hallow-Tide I retorned from Claydon wher I injoyed much comfort in your Father's good company, who I never saw look better in my life then at that time only you ware mising to compleat our contint, wher you ware daly wished for and yr good helth perpetually dronk though not to yr Father who we did not love to discourse of you to, finding your absinc was a troble to him, who I hope you will sodenly come to see, which I am sure will joy his heart to look on . . . bot I wish you had atained to all thos advantages that Yr travel can ad to you, that you might retorn to thos relations that longs to see you.' Peg Gardiner, his playfellow in childish days, writes him an affectionate little note. 'Your wife presents her servis to you, but thinks you a little unkind in staying from her soe long.' Jan. 10, 1670

In 1672 John lost 'Foure hundred & odd pounds' which Gabriel Roberts had put out for him, and during the summer 'wanting business to imploy' him he had been 'voyageing to & fro the Country for severall months.' Dec. 25, 1672

Sir Ralph became somehow possessed of an idea which the imagination refuses to associate with John, that he was neglecting his business at Aleppo for amusement. 'Were there any Pleasure in this country,' John writes, 'I had leasure enough to enjoy it for of Eleven years I have been in Exile, full seven of them have not brought me in imployment enough to reap my Expenses in meat, drink, and clothing, and for the pleasures I can't think of any, except riding twice a week (a little before sunset in summer) and that too is accompanied with such feares (and many times intreagues happen on it) that the edge of delight is quite blunted. Besides this delight is generall, for t'is taken by the whole Nation who particularly dare not venture abroad.' A little later the eldest son of their chief partner Sir Thomas Bludworth, had 'a miraculous escape' on one of these rides 'being about 20 miles from Aleppo, a Gourdeen amongst the rocks, tho' several servants were with him, shot a bullet at him, & cut off the hair off the hinder part of his head.'

May 6, 1673

May 8, 1673

To Mun he writes: 'To satisfye you as to my return home, I hope in 12 months to kiss your hands in England, where the surest Remora to stay your sons is a good inheritance, a thing most of my degree are by law and custom strangers to.'

On reaching London, John was received with much cordiality by his old master, now Sir Gabriel Roberts, and his wife, and the effect produced upon him by meeting old friends and relatives was to make

Sir John Verney
2nd Baronet afterwards
1st Viscount Fermanagh
from a painting
at Claydon House.

John Verney

him yearn for a home of his own after his long banishment. 'If ever I settle in the way of marriage,' he writes to his father, 'I am certain the first proffers are best & at a man's first coming from Turky, for then estates are least known and rumours run high.' Sir Ralph agrees with him 'that young Marchants have the best offers when they first come over,' and John is soon approached in the City by a Mr. Edwards who has a marriageable daughter aged about 19. 'He is a widdower upwards of 60 and saith will never marry againe, a friend of mine who hath knowne him many years tells me he is a very honest man, and that his dau[r] is a good housewife, never bred to Playes nor Parkes, but a sober, discreet & godly young woman. . . . For Mr. Edwards his birth, I know not what 'tis but a plain man he is, & his dealing is in Cloth w[ch] possibly may be of good advantage to me in his advise and skill when I buy that commodity, he is no shop-keeper but lives in a little house in Basinghall St. & will take a bigger as he finds one commodious for him. He hath given his son 2,500*l.* to trade with. By the fire of London he is the worst by 10,000*l.* as he told me, yet he is a rich man computed worth 10,000*l.* so that if I can skrew him up a little higher I know no reason, if the match be consonant to your will but that I may have her. One thing more Mr. Edwards told me that is this, his daughter (he said) brought in no kindred with her, neither of great persons to be a charge by way of entertainment, nor Aug. 1674

of mean to be a charge by way of charity and their needyness.'

Mr. Edwards has naturally a good many questions to put to the 'young Marchant,' but John declines to enter into any details on his side until he has had some chance of making acquaintance with 'his Daughter never by me seen.' Mr. Edwards 'at last agreed to walke his daughter the next morning in Drapers' Garden, where with my master I met them and continued walkeing together nere two houres, this was done that I might have a sight of her to see if I found nothing disgustfull, but we interchang'd not one word with her, only my Master asked her 3 or 4 questions, for 'twas agreed on, that all should be as by accident & he s^{d} he would not acquaint her with the reason of his walking there—but we are at liberty to believe him. Now it remains on my part to give her a visitt, w^{ch} I intend to do in 2 or 3 days, to let them see her Eyes have not quite dazzled my reason, & truly tho' her beauty is not like to preferr her to the title of a Duchess, yet she is a very passable woman & well shapt, & shewd herselfe without any artificiall gracings, save that her Gowne & petticoates were all new; but her head was not in the least adornd for a surprize, w^{ch} I liked ne're the worse, for in Turky we say, If you want a horse buy a lean one, & then you'll see what fatness (that creature's ornament) would have hid from you, but to leave this ayry way of writing, wch I hope (since I beg it) you'll pardon—the Gentlewoman is a

Aug. 20, 1674

passable handsome woman, & her father able if he be but willing to give her money enough.'

The ladies of the family, when John puts off his return to Claydon, at once conclude 'twas courting some woman hindered him,' and Lady Hobart 'put her little ingions in the fire to see if she could discover any such thing,' but John 'stands on his guard against her Female Politics,' hopes she may enjoy her own visit to Claydon, and begs his father to let his guests know that 'our Turky ships from Smyrna left Leghorne the 23rd of July soe that in 10 dayes (Aug. 30) they may be here, 'tis true I am not concerned on them but this may serve as a putt off when anyone talks of my not visiting you.'

Sir Ralph responds affectionately, offers to relieve Jack of his horse, and reminds him that Cousin Jefferyes has a daughter whom he might have inquired about, before concluding the treaty with Mr. Edwards. He begs him to find means to convey ten pounds to Tom in Ireland, 'but write not in your owne hand for he will haunt you eternally with letters of request if he finds that you have any hand in it.' 'As to my Coz Jeffereyes daughter, I knew not,' Jack replies, 'whether there were such a creature in being . . . but if his friends will propose certainetyes, I'le step downe to see her, I think she lives with Coz: Will: Sheppard, but I suppose old fox Dormer (no friend to our family) is the axeltree on which that fortune depends, and I fear his terms at first or last by way of settlements will be as hard

Sept. 3, 1674

to me, as his love to my brother.' He has paid one visit to 'Madam Edwards' and means at his next 'to acquaint her with (what she knows) my arrant.' He has 'verbally agreed' with her father about her fortune in great detail, even to the room the old man is to give them in his house, 'he hath but one room that he can spare and if his son bring home a wife then we must jogg out.' 'This is not amiss,' he concludes, after summing it all up, 'considering if withall I marry one that hath no father, her cloaths at wedding, etc. must all be paid out of the portion, & some people require so much expense in wooing & treating, carrying up and down to playes, etc. that tho' they bring more smoake yet (in the end) there is less roast found.'

John's views of marriage at this time certainly befitted a man 'newly come out of Turky;' and it is a relief to find that these elaborate bargainings came to nothing. He had failed to fall in love, and he fell once more to business; eight years were to elapse, till in middle life John met his fate, and yielded to the spell of a love as true and tender as Sir Ralph had ever felt for 'that incomparable person, Dame Mary of blessed memory.'

THE WHITE HOUSE, EAST CLAYDON.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SQUIRE OF EAST CLAYDON.

1665–1679.

'To what a cumbersome unwieldiness
And burdensome corpulence my Love hath grown.'

'I BEELEEVE you know that Capt: Blarkes is dead. His company was in Alisbery, & Burnham Hundred, certainly hee died of Fatt, for hee would not bee perswaded to rise early, nor to use much excercise, nor to drinke any thing but New Beere, soe that hee was growne very Bigg, & choaked; the Surgeon assures me all his parts were very sound, & that hee verily

beeleeved hee died with Fatt, hee being between 30 & 40 years old. If you know any gentleman that does the very same thing in all points, I wish you could prevaile with him to doe otherwise, least hee kill himselfe by it:' thus did the anxious Sir Ralph preface a moral lecture to his eldest son on his 'ill howers, greate Lazinesse and general course of Liveing.'

The good-humoured and incorrigible Mun was wont to join a little grimly in the laugh against himself; 'I am weary of this deepe Dirty Country life,' he writes on a wet November day, 'for want of such a strong Horse as I may depend upon; yea t'is safer for mee to foot it, then to Ride any Beast of an ordinary Strength, Neverthelesse that is More irksome & dismall to mee, then all the Irish Boggs or Lincolnshire Washes, for I can never Walke, but I sinke so deepe in the Earth, (such a heavy Burthen thereof am I growne) that it puts mee frequently in mind of Korah's, Dathan's, & Abiram's Fate: soe that without the Convenience of a very lusty Good Horse, I am like to stick fast in this Ugly Clay.'

He is a big, tall man, weighing twenty stone at the age of thirty-seven and growing heavier, but he has a certain air of refinement which marks his foreign training, and a wider acquaintance with the world than the country squires about him. He drinks French wines at home, and is not of those who conclude the evening repast under the table. His military bearing is giving way to a slouching gait as

he grows older and stouter, and he can only get on his heavy boots now with 'much ado & great helpe.' His tailor is constantly rebuked for not taking sufficiently ample measurements. 'My Coate is too scanty in the circumference, a fault a man should not have committed that had ever seen me.' He wears a large Grey Beaver Hat with a loop and button on one side, and a knot of ribbons to match the colour of his suit where the brim is turned up. Mary Verney is tall too, but very slight; we hear of a 'black thread bodice she wears at home' and of 'ribband Knots for her head of sky collor, or yallow, to go with it.' He orders his 'stirrup thredd stockins' from the hosier near St. Dunstan's Church; they are to be of a 'bignesse & length wch is greater than ordinary.' When he wishes to pleasure his wife he has a pair made for her in 'very fine worsted, the colour of scarlet Bow-dye, as good as can be gott, The Feet must be very extraordinary smale, but the Leggs must be very long though very little likewise.' He also buys her 'a twelve penny Black Orange Necklesse.' He is very particular about his sword and 'his carabine, his pocket-pistols and screwed pistols,' and has a suit of light armour, tho' the fashion of wearing it has almost gone out. He plays the lute and guitar, and has generally a book on hand; the story of the Siege of Buda, the last French treatise on the Art of War, Mr. Dryden's Verses, Sermons, political squibs and pamphlets, besides the News Letters which come down by the carrier. On his

study table there is 'a very little brass mathematicall instrument about the length of a Pen to draw lines with ink, & also an Ebeny Ruler.' He writes excellent letters, keeps copies of them and dockets those he receives. But while sharing many of Sir Ralph's tastes, he fails where his father excels, in the management of men and in the maintenance of his personal dignity. His disorderly household is the constant theme of local gossip. Nurse Curzon, his head servant, is 'old, crazy and decayed, and hath more need to have one to look to her, than to look after others.' The village nursemaid has been chosen, in Sir Ralph's judgment, 'very unadvisedly, & tis greate odds his child would be changed for one of the Nurse's Sister's children.' Every one about him imposes upon his good nature; entangled in a network of debts which he puts off or ignores, his rents are in arrears, his horses fall lame, and when the ill-written letters his man sends out in his name are complained of, he replies, with a shrug of his broad shoulders, that it is as impossible to make the man a better scribe, as to wash a Blackamoor white. The lads in his employ turn out no better. 'I caused my little boy Thom: Warner to be whipped againe this morning for more ffaults then this sheete will containe viz. Picking Pockets, opening Boxes that were lockt, Picking locks, Stealing, Lying, &c.'

Will Stewkeley, the scapegrace of the family, manages these things better than Mun. 'I wish Will good luck at Brackley,' writes Sir Ralph, '& am glad

hee made soe much advantage of my gelding, Had I a very good Horse that I loved, I had much rather sell him to him for 50 Pounds, then to you for 4 score, for he delights in a good Horse, & takes pleasure to improve him, by his constant care, and kindnesse, and on the other side, you would contrive all imaginable wayes to spoyle him, by Marketing, Dungcarting, carrying Double, & w^{ch} is worst of all, by sending him on Idle Errands, with Idle, ignorant Fellowes, that have neither care, nor skill to ride him, tis true you allow him meate enough, if your men doe not forget to feed him, as they alwaies doe to shoe, wash, or Dresse him, all this beeing true, (and a greate deale more) what comfort could I take to see a poore creature, that I Loved, soe miserably spoyled, by you that ought to preserve him—Enough of this (and too much too) for I am sure you will never mend it.'

Some of Mun's household perplexities are very curious. He has paid Cousin Woodward a visit to arrange for his wife's confinement: 'touchant une sage-femme nous parlâmes de cette demoiselle Kent, ce Quaker de Reading, et elle la loue grandement, d'être tres habile dans son art et le mesme faisait aussi la vielle dam^{elle} Woodward, laquelle fut, il n'y a gueres, dans un lieu ou ce Quaker exerçoit son office, & elle dit qu'elle n'avoit jamais veue une si cognoissante & adroite sage-femme, et que chascun se croit bien heureux s'il peut l'avoir, & qu'on luy donne 20*l.*, 10*l.*, et au moindre 5*l.*, pour sa peine, & que cette

femme ne veut rien prendre des pareins et mareines, & qu'elle ne se mesle jamais à parler de religion a ses patientes, qu'elle eust esté la sage-femme de la Reine, & que si elle promets de venir qu'elle est parfaitement fidele à sa parole.' Mun finally decides, however, on religious grounds, not to engage the clever Quakeress. Mary is generally better when she has a baby to look after, and takes pleasure in the adornment of the cradle and the 'peencushion.' She has a 'white satin Mantle' for herself for the christening of her little Ralph, a white satin waistcoat, a white summer gown lined with white silk and a white mohair petticoat, all of which Aunt Elmes orders in London; there is also a fine white mantle to lay over the head of the cradle, and a smaller one to match, to wrap the child in when taken out, or to form a quilt.

These happy days were too soon overclouded, and Mary's fits of madness made the house at times almost unbearable, though in her worst attacks she was more amenable to her husband's influence than to any other. He was assiduous in his attendance upon her, and was nervously anxious to conceal her condition from every outsider. When in health she was gentle and amiable, and full of sympathy for her poorer neighbours, and she was still 'my beloved wife,' and 'my darling Moll;' but at other times his bitterness of soul overflowed in letters to his father. 'Ma Femme n'est constante que dans ses humeurs et chimères opiniàtres fantastiques et inconstantes.' . . . 'Ma Femme est tellement perverse et outrageuse que

je suis tout a fait las du lieu ou elle est.' He is up with her night after night, no soldier in a campaign gets less sleep, while he complains that he reaps none of the honour which at least rewards the soldier's toil. The poor woman takes knives and scissors to bed with her, and in default of instruments of offence, she swallows her thimble. She assaults her husband with blows and kicks and with a torrent of bad language which hurts him much more; he is afraid to leave her with her maids lest she should injure them, or with any other man lest he should use the necessary force, with less than the necessary gentleness. When his father implores him 'not to tie himself to so strict an attendance,' he accepts an invitation from Sir John Busby to go out hunting with him, and to dine at Addington. On his return he finds the house upside down, the maids crying and screaming, and his wife's hands bleeding from her successful efforts to break every pane of glass in the latticed windows. On calmer days Mary haunts the churches and churchyards, and must have been no small trial to the preacher on Sundays. When Mun takes her to the Middle Claydon service, she waxes restless under the number of headings to which Mr. Butterfield's texts lend themselves, and goes out of church, but just as the worthy divine is reaching the application, she returns again to wander round the font, and distract the attention of his hearers.

Mun is tormented by the infallible cures recommended for her; and 'would go from Dan to Beer-

sheba to get her ease' though nostrums abound at his own door. The Tenant of the Lawn Farm, Widow Scott, boasts of 'a secret powder that sends people to sleep for 3 or 4 days and nights in succession, after which they awake cured.' Old Judith is sent for, and her master conjures her to tell him 'whether she uses any manner of Charmes, Sorceries, or Magic whatever,' but she 'giving devout assurances to the contrary,' is allowed to try her experiment 'which is only the head of a Jack Hare, wrapt in something, & hard bound about the Patient's Head for 3 or 4 days & nights together, and then to be taken off and put into the feathers of a pillow whereon the partie grieved must lye as long as they live.' Mun asks 'What sympatheticall vertue there may be in a melancholy Hare's Braine to draw away all Melancholie out of that of hayre-brained People?' but he adds 'it would be very pretty if so slight a thing should cure.' The woman desires Mary 'should be prayed for during six Sundays successively,' and Mun arranges 'to send bills to some by-church remote from all her relations, That a Person of condition who labours sorely under a melancholy distemper desires the prayers of the congregation,' but so sensitive is he on this point, that 'the partie' is to be nameless.

His steward Dover combines many confidential duties, including a little desultory teaching of the children, and a Godly discourse on Sunday, when 'he can hold forth powerfully to the people.' The old Vicar Maurice Griffith is dead, and his suc-

cessor Hart complains from the pulpit that his wife beats him, and is so far indisposed that he has to be revived with brandy. Dover is considered by the churchwardens to be a valuable stand-by.

During the first years of their marriage Edmund hardly ever left his unhappy wife, but as time went on, her malady seems to have taken a gentler form, and she was content to remain at East Claydon, while he spent 'the Terme' with Sir Ralph in London. Dover kept him informed of the minutest household details, and his master writes him long confidential letters, which he forbids him to show his mother, 'who is a Sieve.' 'There be a Many Cheif in my family, so you sh[ld] tell me How many or wch of them you conceive most lavish, & then I will order my admonition accordingly with circumspection that nothing may be ill taken from you.' 'You must not deny my wife at any time she is well, such a paltry sum as 1*s.*, to play or divert her at cards.' Dover sends him up snipe and other game. Edmund desires him to pay for 'a Partridge 8*d.*, Larks & other small birds as Buntings, Fieldfares, Thrushes or Blackbirds (wch I value equally with Larks) 6*d.* a doz. & no more, for I can buy them so here, even multitudes,' though larks sometimes go up to 18*d.* a dozen. He sends his wife oysters from London, and returns a cloth 'with spratts in it for my family.'

A serious household complication arises when

'a Painter, one Harris,' employed in the White House, falls in love with Mary's favourite maid Jane Avery, and 'his Brother a joyner that wainscotted Mrs. Verney's Chamber entertaynes the like Passion for the same Party; the Party hath noe love for either of the brothers, but they are both unfeignedly in love with the party.' Edmund, possibly to make a diversion, asks leave for the painter to go down to Claydon House, to copy some of 'the Peeces' on the walls; and when Sir Ralph not unnaturally demurs, Edmund assures him that he does 'not desire that the Painter should Meddle wth any of Van Dykes Pictures: But That you Would Be pleased to Graunt Him Liberty to Coppy S^{t} John Baptist, Landskips, and Night Peeces Here, where I'll assure you grand Care shall Be Taken of Them.' Pretty Jenny finally makes choice of the genteeler brother, described as 'the Art Man,' and George Harris carries her off to Oxford, but a year later her mother is summoned in haste, her care is unavailing, and Jenny's death is sincerely mourned at the White House.

Mun has visions of a waiting gentlewoman, who shall exhibit on the most modest salary, virtues seldom seen in combination. She must be so well-bred as to be an acceptable companion to Mary in health, and to watch over her when she visits her neighbours, without ever being in the way. When Mary is capable of giving orders the waiting gentlewoman is to efface herself, at other times she is to

curb the domestic expenditure, and guide the unruly team, without offending either the lawful driver or the driven. She is to make the master of the house comfortable according to his own views of comfort, which differ widely from hers, and she must neither interfere with his habits nor gossip about the unhappy secrets under his roof. Such a Phœnix it would seem existed only in the family crest, but Mun, and even Sir Ralph, sought for her in this wicked world with much faith and persistence. A succession of maiden ladies whose cackling and fluttering were suggestive of a much homelier fowl, each tried her hand at the work. The letters abound with her provocations and good intentions, and it is hard to say whether she gave more offence to the master she tried to serve, or to 'Nan Roades and Betty the Cookmaid' whose privileges were invaded, including the 'cousins,' who made themselves much at home round the great open fireplace in the kitchen. When the gentlewoman's reforms, upstairs and downstairs, threaten to become intolerable, she would be summarily dismissed for what Mun called her plottings and intrigues against him. But she would not improbably be recalled by his remorseful good nature towards a poor relation, when the tears and the quarrellings would begin afresh.

The children who are 'very hopeful' are their father's chief consolation, Ralph (b. 1666), Edmund (b. 1668), and Mary (b. 1675). But as 'the two little Esquires' become more and more capable of mischief

they add heavily to the burdens of the waiting-gentlewoman, as soon as their father is out of sight. Even his threat 'to be about their eares when he comes home,' is not sufficient to enforce his command that they should not 'stirr abroad without Cosen Bestney's leave.'

Little Ralph 'is very Briske, Lively, & full of Mettle,' but at ten years old 'he doth not mind his book and hath profited nothing since he went to his Master, tho' the Child hath parts enough to Learne, he requires more paynes to be taken wth Him then many & his Master hath such abundance of Scholers that he hath not Leisure.' 'I know,' writes his father, 'that Rome was not Built of a Day, yett mee Thinkes some little Matter might bee done towards it.'

The baby boy, Edmund, draws Cousin Parkhurst's little girl as his valentine, and she wears his name in large letters; Mun is puzzled to know what present he should give to such a tiny sweetheart.

A sadder widower than Sir Ralph, he has to supply the place of both parents to his little ones.

April 28, 1679 'Mis wants a nupper Coate,' his servant writes by his desire, 'and I have heere Inclosed a measure taken by a Tayler. She also wants a Petty Coate or too, and a Copple of frockes, my m^{r} Understands not the fashones of Coller or stuff Therefore he Leaves those things to you, but he doth not think Silck so Proper for soe Little a Child, and therefore is unwilling to goe to the cost, he soposes Tammy or sum such kind of stuff most fitt for her and Genteele, my

M^r^ desires you to Enquire what sort of Linen Sutes such Children ware and send him word.' He is very sensitive to kindness shown his little Molly, she has an 'historical pack of cards' sent her as a Christmas present at the discreet age of four, when Lady Hobart describes her as 'handsome & witty,' and is credited with still more severe tastes at seven years old.

'Madam,' Edmund writes to Aunt Sherard, 'My daughter, y^r^ goddaughter, rec^d^ lately a noble present from you, a payre of sylver candlesticks, a curious fine Bible, & the whole Deuty of Man as fine, most Excellent and Best of Bookes, w^ch^ I Have charged Her to Reade & studdy carefully & seriously with a gratefull Remembrance for ever of yr Ladyship, whose good and kind Designe for her welbeing in Giving These Things is apparent as well as yr generosity and Though she cannot yet write you her Thanks for Them her selfe, neverthelesse she Doth it now Here by my Penne, w^ch^ We most humbly Beseech your Ladyship to accept and Beleive that She Hath so much of her ffather in Her that she will bee, as I shall bee while I Breathe, Madam, Yr most perfect Honorer and humble servant.' Dec. 25, 1682

Edmund Verney holds his own Court as Lord of the Manor of East Claydon, and attends the Sessions regularly and the Assizes. He has generally a law-suit in hand about boundaries and rights of way with the neighbouring Squires, whom he considers 'very malicious & stomachfull,' when they disagree with

him. To prevent Mr. Chaloner making 'an Inclosure' he buys up half a yard of land in Steeple Claydon at a high price, and 'the Halfe Cowes Common,' that he may be able to sell it again very dearly, if he should hereafter 'find cause to consent to the enclosure of the Common.' A freeholder has lately in a similar case received 700*l.* for 10*l.* a year; the rights of the public to the common are not so much as mentioned. He is a prominent figure at militia levies, at county elections and at race-meetings, and—when he can find a horse to carry him—in the hunting field. He is a pillar of the Church, prosecutes poachers, and other dissenters, as in duty bound, but he signs the Presentment of Papists and Nonconformists 'very unwillingly, hating to do anything like an Informer tho' never so legally.' He farms some of his own land at a loss, opposes the importation of Irish cattle with other squires whose estates are in 'the breeding counties,' entertains his neighbours with a lavish hospitality that he can ill afford, and generally supports the character of a country gentleman of the period.

Not that his interests are by any means bounded by his acres: he spends part of the year in London, and takes the liveliest interest both in home politics and in the affairs of the Continent. His letters show a fine blend of topics.

'I have informed y^e^ poore Evill People as much as I can concerning their being touched: though her Majestie bee ill, yet she is soe very good, that I am

confident shee will Live eternally, happen to Her what can Here an Earth, I wish the Differences among the Citty Magistrats may end amicably.' He discusses with Sir Ralph the campaigns of Louis XIV., the advance of the Turks against Austria, the politics of Denmark and Sweden, the articles of peace with Algiers, the condition of the West Indies, the Levant trade, and our relations with the Dutch, whom he detests. Sir Ralph gets him the latest published map of the seventeen provinces.

Mun had never the strength of will to take his own line against his father's wishes; he had been absolutely dependent on Sir Ralph for money, and he was such 'an ill husband of his ressources' that his marriage with an heiress had not mended matters. Sir Ralph had never been willing to let him become a soldier or sailor, or to pay his election expenses when he might have entered Parliament, so he had some reason for the complaint he made as a youth, that his father would have him waste his life because he considered it a sufficient profession to be an eldest son.

Mun looked forward vaguely to his succession to Claydon, as a time when he would pay his debts and shake off the evil habits that were growing upon him; but no one was more truly anxious that his father's life should be prolonged, or more desperately unhappy than he was, when Sir Ralph was menaced by any ailment.

His life, though ill-regulated, was not a useless

one; he was always doing kindnesses, and the nickname of 'Noble Soul' which Nancy Nicholas gave him was generally current in the family; but he was stung at times with a sense that he was fitted for better things than he either attempted or achieved.

Mun's attention to the older members of the family made him a favourite with them all. Aunt Isham, who had played an important part in the lives of the young Verneys since their grandfather's days, came to Claydon in the summer of 1667. Her husband had given up the house at Wheatfield near Thame, which they rented from the Tippings; their only son Tom was at Merton College, and about to be called to the Bar, and for a time the old couple were without a home. 'Jugge' (to use the familiar nickname she never lost) was so intent upon 'Pannie's' health, she took scant notice of her own, but she was failing fast. Margaret Elmes, who was at Claydon, nursed her tenderly, and Sir Ralph made careful lists of her little bequests, which were many. Her ample pockets abounded with dainty implements; 'my little silver grater and my silver measure' are left to Sister Sherard, 'my diamond Bodkin to Mrs. Elisha Tipping but first put a stone in it,' 'To Mrs. Nancy Tipping my silver forke and my little gold ring with a posie Ever Constant; To Mrs. Victoria Tipping my best Peticoate; To my neece Nancy Nicholas my Haire Knot made with her father's and my husband's haire.' Lady Tipping desires to have her Herbal. There are several

bequests of plate, and of her 'pictures in little,' one of Sir Edmund Verney is left to 'Neece Adams,' and one of Dr. Denton to his wife. The relations are so distressed about her, they long for letters '& yet dread to open the next.' She died at Claydon House on September 20. Margaret Sherard, who considers that next her husband none have so great a loss as herself, thanks Sir Ralph for his 'great kindness to hir sister; she wanted for nothing that either phisition or friend could assist hir in. . . . God I hope will be a Comfort to her good blind Husband as she youste to cale him.' Dr. Denton writes 'She lived & dyed a good Xstian and the best of us can doe no more.' She was buried in the beautiful Church at Hillesden where she had worshipped as a child, and where her Monument may still be seen. 'Pia Mater! Certa Amica! Optima Conjux!' Her husband survived her but two years and a half, and is buried at Wheatfield; her son, who died in 1676, aged thirty, lies beside her at Hillesden.

Sept. 20, 1667

The members of a former generation were falling quickly one after another like a group of battered elm trees, and the most striking figure among them was cut off in the spring of 1668. Dame Ursula Verney belonged to an older world; married some seventy years before, while Elizabeth was on the throne, she retained the grand manner of her time, and her end would not have been unworthy of the Tudor queen. Her sharp tongue had kept relations at a respectful distance, and there were times

when she was abandoned to the society of her parrots, but her numerous kindred were gathered round her death-bed. 'Lady Hobart & 2 daughters, Pen Denton, & Margaret Elmes, Cousin Turvill, Lady Oakeled, Mrs. Betty Clarke, Lady Knightley & all her own family.' She had bitter memories of Claydon: of her strong-willed mother, who had schemed for her so unhappily; and of the magnificent Sir Francis who had married her in childhood, and abandoned her as soon as they had both reached years of discretion; this she marked by not leaving the worth of a pair of gloves to Sir Ralph or his heir, nor a penny to the poor of the parishes whence her dowry had been so long derived. She desired on her death-bed to alter something in her carefully drawn will, and in the presence of the awe-struck circle she gave her commands. The Lawyer, pen in hand, listened obediently; her mind was clear, her will imperious, but the rattling in her throat made her vehement speech unintelligible, and so she passed away. Sir Ralph, who as the head of the family had constantly provided his old kinswoman with venison in obedience to her commands, was punctiliously anxious under the circumstances to show respect to her memory. His horses were 'out of tune,' but Mun provided a team; his wife seems to have accompanied them, and they drove together the long miles to attend Dame Ursula's funeral at Albury, where so many of their ancestors were already buried.

Feb. 7, 1668

The fact that Edmund's house was only two miles

distant from his father's led to a constant interchange of civilities which must have laid a heavy tax on the smaller household. 'This day wee dined with your Brother,' writes Sir Ralph to John on one of these occasions, '15 of us at our Table, and 11 servants, in all 26 persons, and truly wee were very plentifully provided for, my Cooke did it, and there was noe want of any thinge.' Nancy Nicholas remarks upon it. 'I pety y^r^ pore Squire to have 26 persons to din w^t^ him, you move like one of y^r^ Armis of Caterpilers & so maney of y^ou^ have such good stomaks y^t^ I fancy y^u^ devoer all y^t^ is set before you.' Nancy, in spite of her gibes, dearly loved to be included in Sir Ralph's large parties. 'The Gallery Chamber,' he writes to her, '& the little inward roome to it (wch were formerly Aunt Ishams quarter) are much at your service: the little wanscoate next it, is for another & I hope my friends will bee content to crowd togeather, both at Bed & Board. Another time (when fewer meete) they shall lodg with more conveniency.' There were more chargeable times still, when friends arrived at Claydon House to find Sir Ralph absent, and came on 'to the poor Squire' for a night's entertainment and the loan of his coach and horses. Sir Roger acknowledges 'the most easy conveyance' they gave him to my Lord Saye's. Another day 'Mr. Thos. Wharton passed by with my L^d^ Colchester in his Calash drawne by 6 horses, & my L^d^ Ossory went thro' nobly attended.' 'My Lord Latimer's trumpeters' come from Buckingham

'on a begging complement,' and sound '3 or 4 Levites and as many points of War' in return for Edmund's largesse. So absolute are the claims of the most distant cousins to the hospitality of a country house that when Mun is unwell himself, and has decided 'not to keep Christmas,' he consults his father as to whether there is any polite way of declining a noisy party of youths, who announce that they are coming from town, to spend that season with him. Sir Ralph ponders the question, but writes to Mun at last, 'How to put off these young men is utterly unknown to me.'

Of one of the unscrupulous cousins we hear much. Aunt Abercromby had lately died, and her son Jaconiah, with the blood of the truculent Scotch trooper in his veins, was a hard nut for the family to crack. They desired to pack him off by subscription to his kindred in Scotland, though they frankly said Jamaica would be better; he had a knack of coming back again from everywhere. Aunt Sherard expressed herself bluntly: 'My oppinion is y^{t} all is cast away on him: he was a brewte to his mother and I believe nothing will thrive with him except he repent of that.' Sir Ralph and Mun both contributed to a fund from which Uncle Doctor helped him, keeping a tight hand on the purse-strings. One summer evening, Jaconiah took his cousins at East Claydon by surprise, as Mun informs Sir Ralph.

'Vendredy environs dix heures du soir vint icy

Abercromy avec un Compagnon, qui avait la vraye mine d'un Filou, si jamais j'en vis un; c'estait un Noirant environ de 34 ou 35 ans, avec ses cheveux bien Courts (neammoins sans Peruque quoyqu'il en avoit une dans sa Pochette, comme il me confessa apres) et tout le long des deux Costes anterieures de la Teste jusques à ses oreilles, ses cheveux estoient rognés avecques siseaux, il étoit Homme bien puissant et de plus grande Taille que mon Cousin, et estoit aussi fort beau & civil en son Deportement, et resembloit un Gentil-homme beaucoup plusque Luy, il me dit que son Nom est Alured vulgairement appelé Aldredd, Fils d'un des juges du defeunct Roy selon le rapport d'Abercromy, & ils me dirent Tous deux qu'il vous est cogneu (autrement je ne les aurois pas logés) et qu'il a estè (a scavoir Aluredd) avec vous, et que vous le priasses en son Retour de regarder vos sources à Knowle-Hill, et que vous m'ekririez ou à Holmes, pour les faire vuider, et puis luy montrer, car il pretend estre grand Ingenieur, et qu'il vint de Coventry, ayant estè là pour voir, s'il pouvait tirer l'eau en telle sorte, qu'elle n'incommodera pas ceux, qui travaillent dans la Fosse pour Charbons, le Barronett Smith luy ayant dit comment l'eau descoule; il me dit aussi qu'ils venaient de Glocester, et il me racconta outre cela, qu'il avoit esté eslevé sur la Mer 18 Ans, et qu'il a esté Lieutenant de Sir Jean Lawson nostre Vice-Admiral, et que son defeunct Frère aisnè estait Gentilhomme de 800*l.* sterlins de Rente en Yorkshire, & qu'il avoit un autre

June 6, 1670

Frère appartenant à la Loy dans Grays-Inne: mais pour moy je soubsonne grandement qu'il ment, nonobstant pour l'amour de tant de belles Histoires, le lendemain j'allay luy montrer vos Fontaines à Knowle-Hill, desquelles il prit la mesure avec grand soing, à cequi regarde leur profondeur, pretendant qu'il estait obligé à vous en rendre Conte: puis le mesme jour estant Samedy dernier environs 5 heures apres Midy, ils s'en allerent de Knowle-Hill vers Londre: ores je serois bien aise de scavoir si la verité de tout cecy vous est cognue.'

Sir Ralph had agreed to their coming, and would like well to have water brought up to the house for a 'moderate charge,' but cannot find any way how to secure himself from loss if the engine broke down or was out of order 'as commonly such engines are;' Sir John Winter who is working in the Coventry coal mines 'is like to lose all his labour & his charges too.'

The manners of some of the guests are alarmingly boisterous. 'This is no inviting wether to y^{e} Vaill of Alsbery,' writes Nancy Nicholas on a damp autumn day, 'I hope y^{t} y^{r} dep cuntry will make you all of a more paseable temper y^{n} ye have bin at New Market for there both y^{e} Men among y^{m} selfs & y^{e} women amoung y^{m} selfs have had great Quarils.' They have no lack of illustrious examples. 'My lord whorton's son as maryed my lady rochistars grandchild [Ann Lee] showed himselfe a gallant of the times at Salsbury races, wher hee was more extravagant then most

of the company and so more noted.' Cary can only hope that he will bee 'more grave neer homb.' Henry writes that 'The Kinge is soe delighted with his jorney to nuemarkett and with the sport a saw there that a is ressoveld to spend the mounth of March att that place and for his better incouradgm^t^ divers persons of quality did make afore their breaking upp severall maches to bee runn att that time.' Dr. Denton describes the amusements that had been so congenial to Royalty: 'Neighbour Digby did uppon a wager of 50*l.* undertake to walk (not to run a step) 5 miles on Newmarkett course in an houre, but he lost it by half a minute, but he had y^e^ honor of good company y^e^ Kinge & all his nobles to attend & see him doe it stark naked, (save for a loin-cloth) & barefoot,' and he adds that 'the Queen, for a joke, in a disguise rid behind one to Newport (I thinke Faire) neare Audley Inne to buy a paire of stockins for her sweethart; y^e^ Dutchesse of Monmouth, S^r^ Barnard Gascoigne & others were her comrads. Kate Tate is married to a man of 3,000*l.* pr Ann: Y^e^ Queen sent me word y^t^ she did it to justify y^e^ Sultan.' Oct. 13, 1670

Mun writes: 'The King & the jockeys met at supper at Ned Griffin's where were made 6 hare-matches for 500*l.* a match, to be run at Newmarket next meeting.' On another occasion the king 'has been hawking in Bucks, but walked soe much, he took cold thereon, soe that he fell ill that very night & was unwilling to be blouded, but severall Physi- Nov. 23, 1676 Aug. 28, 1679

cians coming from town, persuaded him to it & likewise to take some Manna . . . the Datchett race was put off . . . he is now said to be pretty well again, which God grant.'

Mun was abundantly feasted in return for his hospitalities. He is 'invited to eate Venison at Mr. Rocheforts, the Parson of Addington,' and he is in constant request with Sir Richard Pigott, the Dormers, the Temples at Stow, Sir William Smith and Sir Peter Tyrrill. Sir Thos. Lee of Hartwell is 'a man of great state.' 'We were but 3 at Table,' Mun writes, 'yet our Treate was to that Degree of Magnificence that to relate the particulars to any sick person would be offensive, so I forbeare.' He also receives 'furious & noble entertainment' at Hillesden, where Alexander Denton considers he can never have sufficient 'lodging guests,' and his beautiful wife Hester seems to be of the same opinion.

March 16, 1675

There is much eating and drinking in Mun's correspondence. Dr. Denton has a picturesque banquet: 'All ye gange was here last night drinking Sir Ralph's health & preying on a goodly formidable beast out of y^e^ Fens called a Bustard, w^ch^ was more then a whole round table & by standers could devoure, When will Barley yard or Knowle Hill produce such a Beast?' 'I pray bee carefull of your children and servants,' writes Sir Ralph anxiously, '& good Mun, keepe goode Howers, both for eating & sleeping, & bee very Temperate, for many dye of Pleurisies, after a fit

of Good fellowship, wee heare of it now more then formerly, & that the excesses of last Christmas have sent many into another world.' Mun replies, 'me semble que le Monde dans ce Temps icy se haste grandement d'aller à l'Autre,' but does not mend his ways.

He is severe upon other people's imprudences: 'Lady Hobart might happily spinne out her Thredd of life a long while yet, if she do not cut it off by quality & quantity of Dyet.'

Lady Gardiner laments that 'there be such revellings and gaming in the Inns of Court at Christmas time,' that it is dangerous to allow Jack to remain in town. Sir John Busby and his lady and other friends meet at the White House, and after the early dinner, play cards till midnight. The next day Edmund takes over his party to dine at Addington, 'after which we fell to cards and continued playing till 9 a'clock' the following morning.

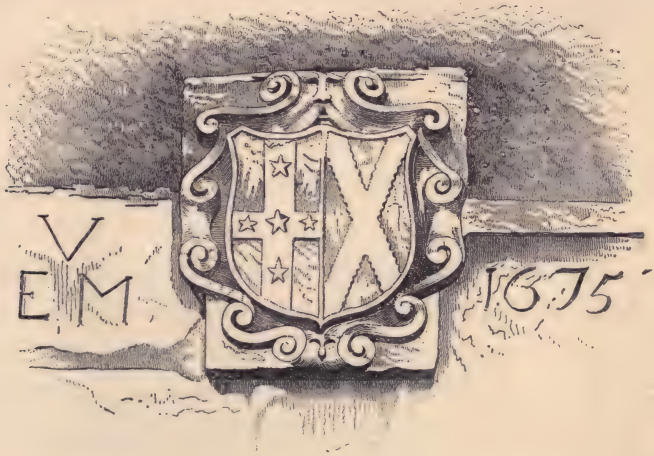
This is his account of a Bucks wedding: 'I dined at Stow yesterday Nelly Denton & Jack Stewkeley went wth mee: Wee met S^{r} Harry Andrewes, & his Lady & Daughter his only Child There, as also Cosen Risley & his Lady & Jack Dodington, & 3 Sisters of Lady Temple, & Mr. Stanion, Husband to one of them, & Nedd Andrewes and Grosve his Father in Law, & Thom. Temple & an other old Temple with 3 or 4 Very Drunken Parsons, w^{ch} made up our Company, Lady Baltinglasse was invited & promised to be there Aug.26, 1675

but ffayled, Wee saw S^r^ Richard & his ffine Lady wedded, & flung the stockin, & then left Them to Themselves, and soe in this manner was Ended the celebration of his Marriage à la mode, after that, wee hadd Musick, Feasting, Drinking, Revelling, Dancing & Kissing: it was Two of the Clock this Morning Before wee Gott Home.'

Sir Ralph exacted in his own house a strictly modern standard of sobriety, but drinking was so much a matter of course in other places, that it was high praise when Lady Gardiner, in giving a servant's character, said she could not hear that Tom 'was given to drink more then whot natur requiared.' In Mun's household, Nature always made large demands on the cellar. It must be said however, that in the country houses where he dined, though the beef and beer were heavy, the guests were generally sober enough to ride home in the small hours of the morning. When John, after his return from the East, owned land in Berkshire, the brothers compare notes: Mun writes 'Y^r^ Arrabian Deserts as you call Them, are much More Cleanely than our dirty Country, & if you knew our People here as well as I do, you would ffind Them ffull as Irreligious & Brutish, as y^r^ People of Wasing, & perhaps more savage then the wild Heathenish Indians, For a Tenant of Myne, an old Man, at an Easter Communion drank up all the wine in the sylver Callice & swore He would have his Peny worth out of it: Being he payd for it. By which

you may see what manner of Men wee are in these Parts. I do not Think that among the Infidels, this story can be Matcht.'

But in spite of times of depression Edmund took an interest in his country life. He and his wife rebuilt the village inn, which with its high-pitched roof is still so picturesque a feature of East Claydon, having their joint initials and the date over the door.



He has his father's love of planting, and is getting black cherry stocks from the Chilterns at three halfpence or twopence apiece to graft choice kinds upon them, and crabstocks from 'my Lord Scudamore's in Herefordshire where the best grow.' Vines imported from Blois produce grapes in Sir Ralph's garden, and Edmund is laying out 'a Little Viniard about two single Rowes of an Acres Length by Way of an Essay, but not to doe as Noah did afterwards;' he

has a small pack of beagles who turn the kitchen spits when nobler sports fail, and we hear of Pheasant-hawking in Runt's Wood. He knows every man and boy about the place, visits the old women who are sick, and sees to their funerals.

Like his father he has a great capacity for taking trouble, and he writes numberless letters to get his men places, or to help on the village boys. One of these he has apprenticed, paying 5*l.* and giving him a good outfit of clothes. 'Nedd is so thick-sculled a fellow without any apprehension, & so indoseble, a cook is the easist trade he can think on for him,' but he proves 'very wavering,' and Edmund's man writes to ask Sir Ralph's servant, Grosvenor, to lecture the boy by his master's desire: 'now that Nedd hath bin with Fosket he hath a mind to be a barber, then if he should smell out Will Scott's sweet shopp his mind will turn to be a perfumer, & so as oft as he spyes any new trade, whereas God watt his stupiditie will find it a hard Taske to learn one, therefore seeing he is such a Nass, he must be drove to understanding of it—& that if he doth not stick to sum thing he will com to nothing.'

The master cook suggests that if the boy 'can neither write, read nor cast,' these three things might be useful to him, and offers to share with the Squire the cost of having him taught; meanwhile the boy refusing to scrape trenchers till his articles are signed, Edmund can only wish that the cook would baste him soundly with his basting ladle, he must be taught

something 'be it butcher, cobbler, tincker or gold-finder, . . . if nothing of all this will doe, he must down in the Contry & be damed to be a perpetuall hewer of wood & drawer of water & so ware a foole's coat & collars if he can yarne it.'

Sir Ralph has a queer story to send :—'My Queen in Hampshire (that was soe handsome) is newly dead, and that very strangly; it seems she and another Lady (a particular friende of hers) agreed that which of them soever died first, should give notice to the other of the Time she should Dye. And this friend of hers died severall yeares past. And about 6 or 8 Weekes since my Queen came to Preshaw, and stayed a fortnight or 3 weekes there, and was as merry, and looked as hansomly and as cheerfully as could bee, and went well away. And 3 dayes after, on a sudden she cried out that her friend now called her, and she must dye very soone, uppon which she immediately fell distracted, and is since Dead, and if this bee not strange, I know not what is. . . . I have now sent you one Dozen of Lemons, and 3 Dozen of Oranges in a Basket, covered with Napkin: I pray send the napkin to Lilly, for I have sent her word you will send it her, and tell me if she hath sent you your cloath that came upp with the Turky and Bacon.' Jan. 1676

Edmund is not to be outdone :—'The Death of the Queene in Hampshire is somewhat strange. We have as Strange a story of a black-smith of Stratten-Audley coming well in Health over Brackley Greene on Horseback: a Dogg with a Paper in his mouth Jan. 10, 1676

mett Him, and Leapt up to Him so often, that at length He tooke the Paper and fflung it away, whereupon the Dogg Leapt up at Him againe, and pinched Him by y^e^ shoulder, after which He came Home, and ffell madd, and so Died, and the paper with bloody Caracters which no Body could Read was found in his Chamber. I humbly thank you for the Lemons and Orenges you sent me, but the Carryer left them behind him.'

March 5 1668

There are constant jokes at the expense of the country cousins. Dr. Denton writes:—'Most excellent Clowne, that is glad his well-bred horses can run noe faster than an ordinary Cow can trott. It were a good deed to send you noe newes, for that reason, & because there is little, you shall know but little. The great debate was yesterday about the Phanaticks & wonderful tugging there was, the result at last was that the King should be desired by the H. of C. to sett out his proclamation for putting the lawes in execution ag^t^ Papists, Phanaticks, etc. Y^r^ coz. of Ormond is coming over . . . this is newes enough for a hob-nail-clowne.' This note is addressed 'For Calfe Raph the Cow-house of Claydon.' As a matter of fact they all come up for 'the Terme,' and Cary mentions it as a great grievance that her 'young company have been kept above 3 years out of London.' Any event of note, at Court or in the City, finds its way in due time to the White House—accidents apart—for the carrier's cart has been known to break down, benighted in Quainton Marsh,

when the mail is entirely lost and the whole country-side is left without public news, as Edmund complains bitterly. Another time the carrier's son, 'that carelesse, drunken Rogue, dropt his letters about Acton, & an Alesbury waggoner perceived them in the cart rout when his wheel was just a going over them, & brought them hither.' The carrier not only lost the letters but 'framed a fine Lye into the bargain' that Sir Ralph had had no leisure to write, and would send letters by the Ailesbury coach.

When we turn to the comments Edmund makes on public affairs, we find his knowledge of them to be far more intimate than anything Macaulay was willing to allow to the 'rustic aristocracy.'

Clarendon's name occurs frequently in Mun's letters, but his fall is referred to with less sympathy than he had a right to expect from the family of an old friend and colleague. The younger generation were more impressed by the Lord Chancellor's haughtiness than by his high principles. Mun thought his position unassailable, and that it was rash to show your teeth to so big a beast, unless you were prepared to bite to the bone. He always sided with the King whoever might be against him, and considered a fallen Minister to be necessarily in the wrong. When, after weary years of exile, the grand old Cavalier died abroad, the rancour against him suddenly subsided; he was buried in Westminster Abbey, 'Sir Ralph was one that held up his Pall, he was met by the Dean (in his episcopal habit) & Chapter, who sang him to his grave.' Jan. 7, 1675

When the Cabal Ministry had taken office, Sir
Jan. 1668 Nathaniel writes 'our chief Minister of State has broken the Peace at home and made a Peace abroad.' He describes the Duke of Buckingham's duel with the Earl of Shrewsbury, and the popular but short-lived Triple Alliance of England and the Protestant powers against France. 'The Duke's friends ascribe it to him, some to my Lord Arlington, but secrecy being so essential to the business, I leave you to judge; others that noe man knew of it, but the King, my L[d] Keeper & Albemarle, but done it is, let who will be the author & contriver.' He recounts the successes of 'Harmon & his Squadron in the W. Indies, burning Dutch and French ships and restoring the English to their ancient possessions there, if this bee true the King may receive a fayre crop, where he never sowed.'

In 1669 the Grand Duke Cosmo of Tuscany was magnificently entertained on visiting this country, by the Dukes of Albemarle and Buckingham. Edmund remarks that the Italians are very wise, and that they have 'far more aptitude for self-government than we Northerners have;' he wishes that the example of decorum and simplicity set by this great prince might be taken to heart in England, and most of all by himself. Mun was elaborately respectful to the severer virtues, with whom he had only a bowing acquaintance.

Sept. 7, 1669 Dr. Denton gives us one more glimpse of 'la Reine Malheureuse,' Henrietta Maria. 'The night

the Queen Mother died she called for her will, said she did not like it, tore off the seals, said she would alter it to-morrow; she complained much of want of sleep, so an opiate was ordained her, & her physician watched with her to give or not to give it to her, he did not like to give it her, but her impatiency extorted it from him, & she died that night.'

The year 1670 opened with the death of Monk, whose name for ten years had been in all men's mouths as the man to help in any crisis: 'On Mounday morning my Lord Generall died,' Sir Ralph writes to Mun, '& left 1,200*l.* per ann: in land, & 18,000 Pounds in Money besides what the Dutches hath in Plate, Jewellery, & in her Privy Purse. tis beeleeved she will never come out of her chamber, being so farre Gon in a consumption. Hee desired the King to give his sonne after him, the Lord Lieutenancy of Devonsheire, and that hee might bee of his Majesties in his Roome, and enjoy his Lodgings at Whitehall. . . . The King sent a Garter to the Young Duke, as soone as his Father was dead, and will burry him at his owne charge, hee is to lie in State at Somerset House, and there is a committee appointed to consider of all things for the Funerall . . . hee was cured of his Dropsie, but had something like an Anchois growne in one of his Arteries which stoped the Passage of his Blood, wh: the Phisitians call soe many hard names, that I can neither write, nor remember them. Mr. Gape was present when the Body was opened. . . . My Lord

Jan. 5, 1670

Craven hath his Regiment. . . . The King will bee Generall himselfe, & hee sayes hee will not put any to bee Commissioner of the Treasury in his Roome, but take care of it himselfe. The Young Duke being married on Thursday last to my Lord Ogles Daughter, & grandchilde to the Duke of Newcastle, is not like to bee so thrifty as his Father, my Lord Ogle & Will Pierrepont (who is granfather to y^{e} young Duches) I heare are Executors. The King, Queen, Duke, & Dutches, have made theire condoling visits to the Widdow Dutches.'

Mun writes, 'Nostre generalissime Monk estoit un homme de bien et brave toutafait, à qui la nation estoit beaucoup obligée, et ainsi doit faire dueil comme ayant perdu sa principale gloire.'

Jan. 19, 1670

A fortnight later Margaret Elmes died suddenly at Mr. Gape's house in town. Edmund and Mary lost in her a warm friend. At Preshaw they 'are all immersed in tears & sorrow,' and his friends are anxious about the effect of this shock on Sir Ralph's health, 'tho' to be unhappy,' Lady Gaudy asserts, 'is as natural as to be.' Cary writes to her nephew: 'The death of my deare Sister Elmes hath bin a great troble to mee and I dar say so it was to y^{r} fathar, for wee three took most comfort in each othar, though ther is four besids us, bot I recon now shee is gone our knot is broken.'

There was a family gathering at Claydon for her burial,[1] the Rector's fee was 'a gold piece called a guinea' then first coming into use.

[1] See vol. ii. 389.

Cary, left executor and residuary legatee, protests that she loves not to run headlong on her own judgment, and does her best to conciliate the family and to carry out her sister's wishes; she divides the clothes between Peg's maid and her sister Betty Adams, and behaves most unselfishly, only to find she has pleased nobody. Mr. Gape's charges for medical attendance and embalming seem on a scale more suited to his last great patient, the Duke of Albemarle, than to so thrifty a subject as Dame Elmes. Sir Thomas is as unreasonable about her death as he has been about every action of her life, and sends Cary a lawyer's letter to assure her that his late wife had no power to make a will at all. 'I have rit to my brother Elmes as modaratly as I could frame my selfe to due, he provoking mee so much About my poor Sister. Should I have sade les, I beleve hee wod think her frinds ware afraid of him and make him the more backword, bot my opinion is that he will not pay a peny till he is sued.'

Sir Ralph was due in London for the marriage of the son of the Master of the Rolls to 'M^r^ Attorney General's daughter;' he writes to Mun, 'Our great wedding will bee over to morrow at night, & then I shall have more leasure. I have been Mounday & Tuesday at Kensington, & never thinke of Bed till 2 or 3 a clock in the Morning. Tomorrow tis kept at the Roles with great magnificence.' He had sought to be excused, but he was a guest too much valued to be let off. 'I am glad you were overcome,' writes Lady Gaudy, 'to be in the company of your

Feb. 16, 1670

friends; Sorrow is too harde for us alone, and your nature so pensive, and your reason so just, as if you were left to yourselfe, I feare you would indulge sadnes too much.'

There were epidemics of persecution against Nonconformists and Quakers, but the Verneys did not readily share in the panics due to (what Dr. Denton styled) 'Chimeras of Phanaticisme.' Sir Ralph informs his son that 'The Arch Bishopp [Sheldon] hath sent letters to all the Bishopps, to call the Clergy before them, & exhort them to conformity, both in reading y^e^ Comon prayer without addition or omission, & to weare the Church Ornaments, & to bee sober and painful in theire calling, & to use all meanes to regaine the Nonconformists, & likewise to endeavour the Suppression of Conventicles, according to Law.'

June 12, 1670

Sir Ralph wants 'to comprehend soe many Dissenters as possible in a Toleration Act.' He writes to Mun, 'Wee had need take all manner of Protestants, against our comon Adversary of Rome, and all little enough I assure you. I will now make you a present of 2 excellent Bookes, Dr. Tillotsons Sermon before the King, and a Seasonable Discourse, for establishing our Religion, in Opposition to Popery, the Author of it I doe not certainly know, but tis very well writ, & I thinke unanswerable. The Sermon speakes as a Divine. The other argues from Reason, & Pollicy, and those arguments are alwaies most taking & lesse disputable.'

Feb. 27, 1672

The most interesting event of the year 1670 is the arrival in England of the fascinating Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans. Edmund could not estimate, as we can, the real importance of her visit, or the full scope of the confidential mission to overthrow the Triple Alliance, with which she was charged by her brother-in-law the King of France to her brother the King of England; but the fame of her goodness, her beauty, and her charm of manner, reached to East Claydon. 'The King,' Sir Ralph writes, 'sent to invite his Sister, Madame, to London; but tis impossible she should come, for she will not yeild the Place to y^e^ Dutchesse of Yorke, nor can it bee allowed that the Dutchesse of Yorke should yeild it unto her.' This difficulty is solved a few days later in Henrietta's favour. 'The King & Duke are at Dover with Madame theire Sister, & this morning the Queen & Dutchesse goe thetherwards, to Visit her, all the Towne is gonn, & the Kings Musicke, & Duke's players, & all the Bravery that could bee got on such a sudden. The Dutchesse is to give the Place to Madame in this kingdome, because the Duke of Orleans alwaies gave it to the Duke of Yorke in France.' . . . . 'I heare the King sent the Earle of St. Albans to the K. of France, to get leave that his Sister might stay a few daies longer in England, & that she might come to London, & I beeleeve tis granted, & that they will all bee heere from Dover this Evening or to morrow, for the whole Court is weary of that place. Heere will bee all the bravery

May 11, 1670

May 25, 1670

& Jollity that England can well afford, & more then will bee payd for, in hast. Just now a friend came in, & tells mee all is crossed againe, & that there is noe leave granted, soe that our Bravery is like to bee at an End, but tis certaine Lady Castlemaine hath farre Exceeded all the French Ladies both in Bravery, & Bewty too.'

Mun writes on hearing of the Duchess's departure, 'Si Madame durant son sejour parmi nous a faict la Paix entre Tant de Monde icy, sans doutte elle est retournée du moins avec cette Beatitude, d'avoir L'honneur d'estre appellée l'enfant du bon Dieu.' The country is still under the spell of that gracious presence when, as Sir Roger expresses it, 'We are heer all startled at the news of the Dutchess of Orleans death.' Mun writes—'Je condole fort la mort subite et inopinée de Madame, c'estoit une brave Princesse, et très illustre, je soubsonne beaucoup qu'elle a estée empoisonnée, et si cela se pouvait trouver, et que le Roi fut de mon humeur, il attemptera Revenge. Je me repens a cet heure que j'ai fait mes habits de couleur, et puisque ce Malheur devait arriver, je souhaite qu'il fut venu auparavant que je les eu faits, ou apres qu'ils furent froissés.' It is a testimony to the general regret felt in England for the death of the Princess, that Mun should feel it necessary at East Claydon to put himself into mourning.

June 26, 1670

In the kingdom of the shades, death allowed Henrietta Stuart the precedence which had been so hotly contested in an earthly court, and then Anne

Hyde also received her summons. Dr. Denton writes: 'The Duchess of Yorke died on Friday, opened on Satterday, embalmed on Sunday & buried last night. I know y^u^ longe to be satisfied whether Pro: or Pa: of w^ch^ ye towne speakes variously. by ye best & truest intelligence she did not dy a Papalina, but she made noe profession or confession eyther way. Her last acts were these, she dined hartily att Burlington house on Thursday before, and that night accordinge to custom she was about ¾ of an houre att her owne accustomed devotions and at her returne from Burlington house she called for her Chaplyn Dr. Turner to pray by her, ye Queen & ye Duke were private with her an hour or more on friday morninge & noe Preest, but Father Howard & Fa: Patrick were attendinge accordinge to theyr duty on ye Queene in ye next roome. Ye Duke sent for ye Bpp of Oxon out of ye Chappell, who came, but her senses were first gone, in ye meane time ye Duke called "Dame doe ye know me," twice or thrice, y^n^ with much strivings she said "I" after a little respite she took a little courage & with what vehemency & tenderness she could she said "Duke, Duke, death is very terrible," which were her last words, I am well assured that she was never without 3 or 4 of her women soe that it was impossible a Priest could come to her.' The Duchess had been nursed with 'extraordinary sedulity' by a young maid of honour, Margaret Blagge[1] (afterwards Mrs. Godolphin) who

April 6, 1671

[1] *Life of Mrs. Godolphin*, by John Evelyn, ed. Bp. of Oxford, 1847.

had been from her childhood in the Duchess' service. She sorrowfully contrasted this scene with her own mother's devout death, who 'ended her life chearfully, left her family in order & was much lamented.' 'A princess honoured in power, with much witt, much money, much esteeme, was full of unspeakable tortur & died (poore creature) in doubt of her Religion without the Sacrament or divine by her, like a poore wretch. The dead Duchess none remembered after one weeke, none were sorry for her, she was tost & flung about, & every one did what they would with that stately carcase.'

Nov. 20, 1673

Two years later 'the Duke has gone and many Popish Lords with him to meet the new Duchesse at Dover, Crow Bishop of Oxford went to marry them, they come to Whitehall by water, & so there will be no show in the city.' Sir Ralph remarks after Mary of Modena has been a few months in England, that the new Duchess is better looking than he ever thought she would be, and Anne Hyde, the mother of two English Queens, is quite forgotten.

During all these years the old affectionate intercourse was kept up with the Burgoynes. Sir Roger was godfather to Edmund's eldest boy, and Sir Ralph's visits to Wroxall and Sutton were the events of the year to his devoted friend. Sir Roger's old age was brightened by the love of his second wife, Anne Robinson of Dighton, Yorkshire, who brought him a second family of children. She was a capable and accomplished woman, but no one's opinion

weighed with Trusty Roger, when Sir Ralph's was to be had. In his voluminous correspondence, every detail of his life was submitted to his friend's judgment. The proportions of the new terrace, the provisions of his will, the colour of a waistcoat and the filling up of a living wait alike for his decision. And when Sir Roger is thrown 'into some small confusion' by finding that a guest 'who came unexpectedly on Saturday with my brother John, expresses a kindness for my daughter, tho' he hath not yet spoke with me about it,' he hastens to lay all the probabilities before his friend. When Mr. Simmons is accepted, Sir Ralph must pronounce upon the trousseau, and choose the wedding-clothes of the whole family. Sir Roger writes that 'One June 1667
coloured & two black gownes are to be made for the bride: what kinds of silk and lace should be got for the best black? what for the second, as also for the Couler'd that must beare the name of a wedding one, though not to be worn till the day after? what lace for the best handkerchief, points being out, & what value? I doubt the old fellow must have a new vest and tunick for the credit of the lass: if any I must desire you to provide materialls of all sorts according to yo^{r} own fancy, and I promise you they shall be liked provided not too deare: I am for black: having made me an ordinary stuff one very lately: I would have one for my sonn if I knew what. He has a stuff one newly made, but I would have another against that time, he is now going to

Cambridge: but to return to the wedding. Pardon all my faults as you love me.' A few days later 'My wife as myselfe acknowledges your favours having rec'd the things you sent, the hatt is very fitt, and my wife so much approves of the lace as to think it too good for hir selfe to weare, but I am apt to believe all women will be soon weaned from such thoughts, only shee desires to know what it costs.' Lady Burgoyne's point-lace came to 5*l.* 12*s.*, and the cuff-lace to 2*l.* 3*s.*

Sir Ralph was at Wroxall considering the many questions his host had pigeon-holed in his mind, for the enjoyment of a personal discussion, when he heard that Henry was very ill, 'deeply gon in the Glanders' as Pen expressed it, as if she were describing his horse. A few days before he had written to complain of the condition of a haunch of venison from Claydon, which though 'my Lady Hobart had cookt it with vinegar, noe flesh could abide the smell of, but I & my friends will drinck your health & make merry with it as much as my health will give mee leave.' Sir Ralph hurried home 'as fast as his man's falling sickness would allow,' and there found the news of Henry's death, which distressed him extremely. He had left all he had to Pen, and she wished him buried at Claydon, provided she could be laid beside him, which Sir Ralph heartily agreed to. Pen put up a handsome monument to his memory, which she tried to make Sir Ralph pay for—very shabbily, the relations thought—'but she is mad and will demand things.'

Aug. 28, 1671

Edmund wrote out to John at Aleppo—'For domestic newes I shall acquaint you that my Uncle Henry Verney and my father's Cooke honest Michael Durant are both lately dead.' The adjective was reserved for the cook, whom in truth he considered the more valuable man. 'Misho,' as Claydon called him, had served his master, man and boy, for about twenty years, and such was his fame that no wedding breakfast, or funeral supper, or Christmas feast in the neighbourhood was felt to be adequately carried out without his supervision.

The 'loyal & indigent' Colonel left behind him a bag of money in the Doctor's care, which the latter estimated to contain at least 700 guineas, if not 1,000: he had remarked genially that there were some gilt shillings in it. Penelope, who had learnt thrift in a hard school, took her family by surprise shortly after, by her marriage with 'Sir John Osborn K^t^ of Devonshire,' and still more by the announcement that she was worth 6,000*l.* 'I never heard of a more Joyed woman than my Sister Osborne,' writes Cary, 'I feare her good fortune will make all old women marry.'

'Pen was always a great scraper,' remarked a relation less happily gifted, 'but I thought she had not been so great a getter; S^r^ John is so high already in her opinion & affection she is like to prove a good wife to him, however she is for a Sister or an Aunt;' and the prediction was verified. Lady Osborne had apartments 'on the stairs in Whitehall,' frequented the Court, kept her coach, and lived more than

twenty years in the enjoyment of this evening sunshine, which she thoroughly appreciated.

In 1672 the Dutch War has broken out, and Edmund is fretted by his own inaction. He had always been attracted by the Navy, and he seemed to know by instinct the names and tonnage of our ships, and their stations. Being very wroth at our disasters at sea, and at what he deemed the cowardice and incapacity of our officers, unwieldy as he was, and more likely to sink a boat than to fight her, he suddenly resolved to volunteer. He had spoken to his father on the subject, but he makes an earnest appeal to him in writing, he feels the war a righteous one, and he is ashamed to be out of the Fleet now that the Heir-apparent of the Crown is engaged in it. 'Mon Genie souffre telle Agonie d'estre hors d'Action dans ce temps belliqueux qu'il rend mon corps aussi assoupi et languissant qu'un Poisson hors de l'eau, en sorte que je ne puis m'empescher sur ce sujet de vous racconter quelques courtes contemplations de Mon Ame parmi ma grande abondance . . . . or touchant la Malheureuse condition de ma famille je ne desespere pas de la Providence Divine. . . . Mettant Fiance entiere dans la Misericorde du bon Dieu.' He remembers the services of his grandfather and his glorious end, and that he was pleased to bestow his own name upon him at his baptism; he would seek deliverance in active service from all that he feels unworthy in his present course of life, and he earnestly begs his father's assistance in this — a

turning-point in his life. But it was a wild project at best, an attempt to wrest out of the hand of Time, the years of youth that had slipped away from him, and to the reasonable and unwarlike Sir Ralph it seemed too preposterous a plan for discussion. 'I pray let me heare noe more of it,' he writes, 'for I cannot mention it with patience,' and on receiving a further letter: 'Mun, I pray say noe more of your desires to goe into the Fleet, unlesse you have a minde to render mee & your children miserable.' To make amends for his curt refusal even to consider this proposal, he writes Mun a longer letter than usual, with all the news he specially cares to hear; he does not think 'the Hollander soe easy a bit to swallow' as some do; 'the little Victory, a shipp of 38 guns and 250 men was unhappily taken by the Dutch fleet. Capt. Fletcher commanded her & is very ill-spoken of, for hee yielded without shooting one Gunn. Twas a greate mercy that the King had been at our Fleet for he made them goe out of the River into the Downes some dayes sooner then they intended & had they not gon out the Dutch Fleet had surprized them & might have Fired them, for such greate Shipps could not be brought to fight in a River . . . . The French Fleet are brave vessels & in a very good equipage to fight, not a caben to be seen amongst them, but all their decks cleared as if they were to fight an hour hence. The King gave money liberally amongst them. . . . . Tis beeleeved the Dutch will fight under decks, that is only with

May 9, 1672

cannon, for they want men & are affrayd to lose those they have. . . . . Seamen & Watermen are daily impressed, there are 400 Men now sent out of the Guards, to supply the shipps, till the Irish come upp, whom we hear are now landed.' There is a further story of the Kent frigate of 50 guns, 'lost within 3 leagues of Harwich. The seamen beleeve she was bewitcht, they tell stories of a crow hoveringe over them 2 days togeather in stormy weather &c. only ye captaine & 11 men saved.'

The letters meant to daunt Mun's ambitions, only roused them the more, but he bows to his father's will—'je choisirai d'offrir violence à mon genie, et ainsi passer ma vie comme un Faisnéant plus tôt que comme un fils desobeissant;' he pours out his pent-up wrath on Capt. Fletcher, whom he longs to see shot, and then relapses into the ordinary routine of his life in the heavy clay of his native county, 'ou je suis empestré parmi mes yvrongues de Paisans.'

The following spring there is a brief reference to the break up of a very happy home, in a letter of Sir Ralph's to Mun: 'Just now S^r^ Nathaniell Hobart died, & doubtlesse hee is a Blessed Saint in Heaven.' Sir Ralph was Lady Hobart's chief stay during her husband's very painful illness, and in all her mourning. He writes again: 'Our Deare friend S^r^ Nathaniell was decently buried on Satterday at 10 in the night, in the Temple Church, none were invited, but the houre being knowne, many of his friendes came to attend him to his grave.'

Feb. 19, 1673

Before long he is called upon to comfort one still dearer to him. 'This morning it pleased Almighty God to call to his mercy the soule of my good Aunt Denton, to the greate griefe of my deare Uncle Dr & all that knew her. Shee died in a good old Age, without any paine, or sicknesse, & had her senses to the last or very neare her last.' Catherine Denton was buried 'in the chancell of St. Margaret's Westminster,' (possibly in a vault belonging to her first husband's family) where a monument to John Birt (or Bert) Protonotary of the King's Palace, 1638, is described by Stow. July 6, 1675

The Rev. Edward Butterfield continued his labours as rector of Middle Claydon, aided in his declining years by his son William, who, after spending five years at Oxford, left with an M.A. degree and was ordained by the Bishop, Dr. Compton, in 1675. On his father's death in 1678, he applied to Sir Ralph for the living, who returned him a 'doubtful answer,' desiring first to see him married. William Butterfield was a man singularly amenable to good advice. Having no preferences, he consulted the patron as to a suitable partner, and Sir Ralph recommended Mistress Sarah Lovett, of an old Bucks family, allied to the Verneys by many ties of friendship; 'A Person of that Excellent Form, and Wit and Family as to command the greatest admiration and esteem.' Edmund Verney, who took a kindly interest in the young parson, writes: 'Mr. Will: Butterfield Goes A Woeing Might & Mayne to Mrs Jan. 2, 1679

Lovet: Hee expects a New Hatt to morrow from London, soe Hee would have putt of his journey to His Amata untill that came; but I offered to Lend him Myne, for that Delayes were Dangerous, & this Morn^{g} He intended for Ethrop without a new one, Myne not fitting him.'

He was tossed about like a shuttlecock, between Father Lovett—who would only promise him his daughter when he should be Rector of Claydon—and Sir Ralph, who would think about it after, but not before, his marriage. He was a good deal bewildered, and never quite understood how he finally came to acquire both the living and 'my now dear Wife,' but he was clear that, had he followed his own counsel, he would neither have been ordained nor married. There is a droll pathos in the situation; but William Butterfield fulfilled both vows as an honourable man, and inherited his father's popularity at Claydon.

There was a good deal of paternal government in the cottages, carried out by squire and parson, with a firm but kindly hand. We get glimpses of the village life in Edmund's letters to Sir Ralph.

Jan. 29, 1677

'Last Satterday Night There Beffell a most sadd and lamentable Accident unto yr Tenant William Taylour, His House is Burnt Downe to the Ground and very little saved that was in it. He Hadd a Calf and a Cow Burnt, this Mischance Happened by Heating of their oven as They conceive. I sent my Man Wood This morning to see in what

condition They are, and his children have never a rag to cover them. I sent them in my Cart a ffull Barrell of Beare & Gave Them my Barrell also. This misfortune makes me Apprehend some Mischeif from our Church House, wherein There are ffoure ffamilies That make ffires without a Chimney against wattled walls only Daubed over with Mortar, There is one Common Chimney in the sayd House, but None of Them will use it, because Every One will Be private: yet my ffather-in-law Abell made Them use ffire no where but in their common Chimney, when There were as many ffamilies in the Churchhouse as there are now. This Church or Wake House stands upon Ground Given to y^e^ Church. and there are 4 or 5 Lands in y^e^ ffeild without Common Given to repaire it, Let for about five Nobles a yeare, all w^ch^ is in the Disposall of the Church Wardens, but I Beleive They Do misapply that income to save Their Purses so farr as t'will go from Releiving the Poore: and That is the Reason that the very House is so much Decayed, through their willfull Neglect upon that consideration, whereby They suffer the now Dwellers to Do what They please to the great Hazard and Danger of Taking ffire.'

One of Edmund's men sends him 'some very good lace' which his daughter has made. He gives the lace-worker a guinea, Betty 'makes it up into a cravatt' of the new mode, and he intends to 'make himself fine with it at Christmasse.'

Edmund rejoices in the detection of the 'Cooper

who hath stole a greate many of the best Pales from Sr William Smith's Park, to make Coopery ware,' and of other sturdy vagabonds, 'who come with Dogg & Gunne, Perching, Poching & killing Pheasants in y^r^ Woods & mine.' Sir John Busby told me How He committed one Smith of Oakely to the Goale. Twas He that cheated young John Hicks. He is a Very Rogue I believe but whether any thing can be proved against Him sufficient to Hang Him Time must Try, it is sayd That He Hath maliciously Killed a World of Cattle & perticularily above 100 Cowes in the Oakely Parish where He Dwelt with one Eustace a Butcher There, who divided the advantage thereby with Him: it is Reported He Hath stollen Horses too.' The rough justice the squires administered sounds harsh to us, but when a servant of Edmund's is ill he can always command 'the best the house can afford;' at East Claydon a sick man is moved into the guest-chamber in order to have a fire. In London his footboy 'Dick is ffallen sick, and in all liklyhood will Have the smale Pox, I sent Him out of this House yesterday in a Chayre, (& that a Sedan) to a Good Nurse-keeper who Tended my Lady Gardiner's Children: my uncle Doctor Denton Hath Been with Him and is his Physitian, if He were my owne Child I could do no more for Him, He shal want for Nothing.'

'Your friend Clarendon has lost his key,' Dr. Denton tells Sir Ralph; 'the pretence was that he struck the guard,' who had denied him admittance

April 25, 1675

to a play acted at Court, the house being full. 'Other reasons are guessed,' for 'a L^{d} Chamberlain was never before turned out for striking a yeoman of the guard.'

The grand manners of the courtiers are offensive to the plain country gentlemen, and this little bit of gossip is much appreciated: 'y^{e} Duke of Somerset visitinge Ambassador Berkeley, he rec^{d} him wth great State keepinge his chaire of State wth his hatt on; y^{e} Duke in his returne meets wth the Earle of Shrewsbury, going to Berkley to whom my L^{d} relatinge his reception said, he w^{d} be even wth him who on approaching was rec^{d} after y^{e} same manner (viz wth out calling for a seat or being spoken unto to putt on his hatt) but he reach't his owne seat, putt on his hat, & sate close to him, w^{n} he tooke his leave, Berkely told him he had affronted him. Shrewsbury answered y^{t} he knew how to treat him in his publiq & private station, & y^{t} he might know y^{t} at home, he was a better man than himselfe.' The chief foreign news is the death of the great French general 'by a cannon shot from an ambuscade.' 'The French King says little but Jesus Maria, & beats his breast, wch when he observes any to take notice on it, he then laments the loss of his dear friend Turenne.' Aug. 30, 1675

John writes of 'a sad fire at Northampton, not 40 houses left unburnt.' Sept. 23, 1675

Sir Ralph takes a deep interest in his little grandsons, and keeps one of Ralph's first letters, endorsed 'from Little Master with a basket.'

'Honoured S^r^,—I And my Brother present our most humble Dutys unto you ; and my Sister presents Hers allso; And I have sent you a small present which I doe humbly beseech you to accept of, which is A few Puddins . . . . For S^r^ Ralph Verney K^t^ & Bart in London.'

Mun consults him about their schooling. Ralph is at Mr. Blackwell's School at Bicester in 1678.

Feb. 18, 1678

'I went unto Water Stratford unto One M^r^ Masons House the Minister and Schoole Master There, to see what accommodation There was for my Boy Mun in case I put Him There to Schoole, my Man Wood's Mother dwells There at present, and if I send Him Thither, He is to Lye with Her in a Roome good Enough over the Kitchen: all w^ch^ I like very well, for shee is a good Discreet Woman and says she will Be mighty Carefull of Him: I like as well M^r^ Mason Himselfe who seemes to Be a very good conscientious Man and Scholar Enough, his Termes are but £12 pr Annum w^ch^ is a 4th part Lesse then M^r^ Blackwells. But somewhere by the Grace of God I do firmely Resolve to put out my Boy Mun to Schoole sometime in next moneth, and we Have good Schoolemasters Enough about us, viz. M^r^ Blackwell at Bicester, [where Ralph was already] M^r^ Rocheford at Addington, M^r^ Mason at Water Stratford, and M^r^ Amand at Thorneton who writes an admirable Hand as I am told, All w^ch^ I Name unto you Desiring yr Opinion w^ch^ of all These you Like Best and I will put Him There.'

Mun is eventually sent to join his brother; but the results are not all that could be wished, Mr. Blackwell is often ill, when 'the gentleman-boarders straggle' at their pleasure, and finally Ralph desires to come home, as they have measles in the school, and small-pox in the house next to them. 'Go, tell my boy Ralph, he should not be afraid, for that's pusillanimity,' but though Dover carried this tonic message, Edmund confesses that he cannot keep his boys 'very long at these schools,' and wishes he had 'the Donation of our Vicarage,' 'to Gratify some Poore sober young Schollar that would very carefully Looke to my sonnes, and Industriously instruct Them in Learning and Vertu.'

Of the public schools he puts Winchester first, but for its distance from Claydon, Eton next, and Westminster last, because it is in London. Harrow is not mentioned, though Dr. Denton's grandson is there, preparing for Oxford.

'This day dining at my Sister Gardiner's,' Sir Ralph writes to his son, 'I met with Mr. Burrell, & Finding him to bee a discret young Man, about 20 yeares old, I examined him about Eaton Schole (hee being of the Foundation), if you resolve to send your Eldest sonn thether, (if Mr. Burrell bee not sped to Cambridg,) I thinke he is a very fit Man to take care of your sonn there; but my oppinion is to send him into France, (with a sober, discret Governour,) rather then into any schole in England, God direct you for the Best. . . . I have now sent

Dec. 29, 1679

you a Weekes Preparation for the Sacrament tis very short & very good, I bought Three, one for you, another for your Brother, & the Third for my selfe.' Edmund, whose own education had been carried on in France, Italy, and the Low Countries, considered that the acquisition of modern languages, and of a certain polish, were too dearly purchased by giving up the advantages of educating a boy in England.

Ralph at sixteen is to go to Winchester. He is to live in the College, the outfit required is large, and 'Gentlemen Commoners wear very costly gownes;' 'Kersey's Arithmetic' is one of his books. Edmund had settled to take him: 'My Boy Ralph having lost his ague, keepes a great deale of Begging at me to go on Horseback, pretending that he is alwaies sick in a Coach.' So the father and son ride from Claydon to Winchester with two servants on horseback. Ralph seems to have been there only two terms, when his father wrote as follows to his master, whose name is unfortunately not given on the copy kept of the letter (September 5, 1682).

'Sir, I Received yr Civill Letter, for w^{ch} I Returne you my Very Hearty Thankes, as also for yr paynes about my Sonne & care of Him: I Didd ffully Intend to send Him Back to you (or M^{r} Usher which of you I know not) But Hearing you Gave a very Ill Character of Him Here before a great deale of Company at Table openly at London, Since he left Winchester I Didd not Think it Decent in me to Trouble so accomplisht a Gentleman as you are nor

y^r^ Schoole with such a Block Head any more, for I Know ffull well, that Ex quorvis Ligno non ffit Mercurius, and am sorry that my Sonne should Be composed of such substance that nothing can shape Him for a Schollar. But it is his ffault and None But His, and the worst wilbe his owne at long Runne, for William of Wickham's ffoundation is I Beleive the Best Nursery of Learning for young Children in the World, and perhaps never was Better provided with abler Teachers then now at this present, yr selfe for a Master, Mr. Home for an Usher and M^r^ Terry for a Tutor. I Have another Sonne, whom I Ever Designed for Winchester also. I Do not Despayre But That He may Regaine the lost Reputation of his Brother, But untill the ill impression w^ch^ my Eldest Hath Left Behind Him in Winton Be utterly eraced and Worne out, I am ashamed to send Him Least the impression should prove a Disadvantage to Him in yr Schoole. I understand that my worthy ffreind D^r^ Sherrock Hath payd All my Sonne's scores within and without the Colledge in Winchester. I pray Deliver this Enclosed Letter from my Sonne to M^r^ Terry his Tutor and you will oblige yr Humble Servant Edmund Verney. . . . Things may (I hope) Be so cleared that his Brother may appeare There with Credit and Honor Hereafter: if I should send Him.' Ralph's note to his tutor does not suggest that he considered himself in disgrace, he writes affably as one gentleman to another, and makes a present to Mr. Terry of his green carpet.

Mun was probably writing under 'the horrible smart' from a bad leg, which tormented him in later years, for he shows as much irritability to little Mun, who had just earned for himself the title of 'as goode a childe as can be' after a visit to his grandfather.

'Childe, I Received a Letter from yr Master Mr Blackwell, who complaines of you in yr Businesse, & That you are Idely & Evilly inclined, and particularily That you jointly with some other, as Badd as yr selfe, Have lately Mischeifed a Tablet or two of his, and That you Rise in the Nights which was made to Rest and Sleepe in . . . you Have much Deceived me, yr ffather, who Blinded with Love to you, Thought you no lesse then a young Saint, But now to my Greife perceive, That you are Growing very fast to Be an old Devill.' He 'designes forthwith to choose a place for him of extreme severity such as he had never felt nor seen;' a threat which fell harmless on this hardened offender, who doted upon his father, and infinitely preferred his wrath and bluster to Mr. Blackwell's favours.

Mun is anxious to get Molly away from home, much as he would miss her, and at eight years old he takes her with him to London. 'Tomorrow I intend to carry my Girle to Schoole, after I have showd her Bartholomew Fayre & the Tombs & when I have visited her & a little wonted her to the place, I'll come home.' She goes to 'Mrs. Priest's school at Great Chelsey,' in Mrs. John Verney's chariot with

her father, aunt and brother. She learns to dance gracefully and 'to Japan boxes,' but more solid acquirements seem to be wholly left to Mrs. Priest's discretion. To Molly he writes: 'I find you have a desire to learn to Jappan, as you call it, and I approve of it; and so I shall of any thing that is Good & Virtuous, therefore learn in God's name all Good Things, & I will willingly be at the Charge so farr as I am able—tho' They come from Japan & from never so farr & Looke of an Indian Hue & Odour, for I admire all accomplishments that will render you considerable & Lovely in the sight of God & man; & therefore I hope you performe y^{r} Part according to y^{r} word & employ y^{r} time well, & so I pray God blesse you.' To learn this art 'costs a Guiney entrance & some 40*s*. more to buy materials to work upon.' Edmund hopes to put her later into the household of a lady of quality, paying her board and giving her a maid, and then to marry her to a country squire of good character and moderate income; and he desires for his little Molly no happier fate.

CHAPTER VII.

UNDER THE MERRY MONARCH.

1675–1685.

'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'

THE reign of Charles II. was pre-eminently an age of hospitality. It was—on the surface at all events—a time of coarse wit and loud laughter, of clever talk, of dancing, duelling, dining, theatre-going, card-playing, and horse-racing, and of amusement raised to the dignity of a fine art.

It has been said that England suffered more from the King's virtues than from his vices, because his perfect manners made self-indulgence 'appear a part of good breeding, and essential to charm.' Not all the King's lieges stopped short, as he did, of excessive drinking and ruinous gambling.

A typical figure amongst the young men at Whitehall is Philip Herbert, 'Beauish Pembroke.' He succeeded as seventh Earl when just of age, was made Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire the next year, and married Henriette de Queroualle, sister of the Duchess of Portsmouth.

April 20, 1676 This is Dr. Denton's account of my Lord of Pembroke's dinner party: 'James Herbert lost his

cause. Pembroke treated ye Jury, where every one was affraid to sitt next to him, but att last S^r ffr: Vincent did, my Ld began a small health of 2 bottles, w^ch S^r ffr refusinge to pledge, dashed w^th a bottle att his head, & as it is said broke it, they beinge parted S^r ffr was gettinge into a coach & alarm arisinge y^t my Ld was cominge w^th his sworde drawne, S^r ffr refused to enter, sayinge he was never afraid of a naked sword in his life, & come he did, & at a passe my Ld brake his sword, att w^ch S^r ffr Cryed he scorned to take ye advantage, & then threw away his owne sword & flew att him furiously, beate him, threw him downe in ye kennell, nubbled him & dawb'd him daintily & soe were parted. A footman of my Lds followed mischeivously S^r ffr into a boat & him S^r ffr threw into the Thames, two more were cominge w^th like intentions, but some red coats knowinge S^r ffr., drew in his defence & I heare noe more of it.' A little later 'My Ld Pembroke being in a Balcony in the haymarket with other Gent^n, some Blades pass^d by and fired at him but mist him & kill^d another.'

Dr. Denton relates a still more outrageous scene in the room of a lady of quality. 'Two exchange women (to whom Lady Mohun owed a bill, and to whom payment was promised with Michaelmas rents, w^th wch they seemed satisfied,) after drinking brandy, came with 4 braves to my Lord's lodgings: the women went up, spit in my lady's face &c. the men staid below and cried where is my L^d &c. My Lord Oct. 5, 1676

at this alarm went upstairs, took his sword & pistol & one of his men the like, and after some passes, shot, miss'd the man but shot thro' his hat; that not doing shot again, but the pistol would not go off: the hubbub increasing they retreated, my lord having rec^{d} a slight wound on his hand; they were 3 Irish & one life-guardsman.' The guardsman, when wanted by justice, is screened by his officers, though perfectly well-known ('one Sutton of Laxington's family'), and takes occasion to beat Lord Mohun's footman next time he meets him. My Lord himself dies of a wound received in a duel the following year.

Sir Ralph rejoices that a tax of twopence a quart is put on wine to pay the King's debts. 'Twill come to above a Million; to the exceeding greate satisfaction of his Ma^{tie} and noe burden to the People, or theire Lands, for if they have noe Minde to pay this Tax, let them bee drunke with Ale and strong Beere. I beeleeve Brandy will be forbid, or soe greate a Tax Layd on it that none will import it: for since Labouring men have got a Trick of drinking Brandy, tis evident it hath hindred the Brewing of many hundred thousand quarters of Mault in England.'

March 11, 1675

'The Citizens are most noble feasters.' John Verney describes the 'Great Wedding made by y^{e} Widdow Morisco for her Eldest daughter (who had 10, or 11,000£ portion) married to Ald^{n} Fredericks son & kept at Drapers Hall, the first day there were 600 dishes, & the second & third dayes were alsoe great feasting at ye same charge, And then S^{r} J^{no}

frederick entertained them with 400 dishes, And this day the six Bridemen (for so many there were & six bridemaydes) Entertaine the company. . . Today is another great Wedding kept at Coopers hall, between Kistings son, & Dashwood (the Brewers daughter) both Anabaptists, I intend to be there in ye evening.'

Child marriages, with consent of parents, are still solemnised; Sir Ralph speaks of 'a young Wedding between Lady Grace Grenville, & S^r George Cartwright's Grandson, which was consummated on Tuesday by the Bishopp of Durham; she is 6 yeares old and hee a little above 8 yeares old, therfore questionlesse they will carry themselves very Gravely & Love dearly.' . . . 'The E. of Litchfield is married to the Dutchess of Cleveland's daughter, who is 11 years old, & the Earl 12.' Sir Ralph is his trustee, and is afterwards godfather to his third son; the Duke of Southampton and Lady St. John being his gossips. March 18, 1675

Ursula Stewkeley illustrates the manners of a fast young lady of the period. Cary writes to Sir Ralph, her husband being in London. 'I wish he had stayed at home, Bot yr sex will follow yr Enclynations w^ch is not for women's convenincys. I should bee more contented if his daughter Ursula ware not heare, who after 8 months plesure came homb unsatisfied, declaring Preshaw was never so irksome to her, & now hath bin at all the Salsbury rasis, dancing like wild with Mr Clarks whom Jack May 4, 1674

can give you a carictor of, & came home of a Saturday night just before our Winton rasis, at neer 12 a clok when my famyly was a bed, with Mr Charls Torner, a man I know not, Judg Torner's son, who was tryed for his life last November for killing a man, one of the numbar that stils themselves Tiborn Club, And Mr Clark's brother, who sat up 2 nights till neer 3 a Clok, & said, shee had never bin in bed sinc shee went a way till 4 in the morning, & danced some nights till 7 in the Morning. Then shee borrowed a coach & went to our rasis, & wod have got dancars if shee could, then brought homb this crue with her a gaine, & sat up the same time. All this has sophytiently vexed me. her father was 6 days of this time from home, & lay out 3 nights of it, & fryday shee was brought home & brought with her Mr Torner's linin to be mended & washed heare & sent after him to London, where he went on Saturday, to see how his brother Mun is come of his tryall for killing a man just before the last sircut, And sinc these ware gone I reflecting on thes actions, & shee declaring she could not be pleased without dancing 12 hours in the 24, & takeing it ill I denied in my husband's absenc to have 7 ranting fellows come to Preshaw & bring musick, was very angry & had ordered wher they should all ly, shee designed mee to ly with Peg G, & I scaring her, & contrydicting her, we had a great quorill.'

Mr. Stewkeley was detained at Winchester with Captain Norton, 'for a gentleman of the B^{ps} came to

us in our Inne and Invited us to a pasty of venison w^ch^ stayd us untill past 3 aclock,' but on his return, 'after a long absence the more welcome,' he devises some private theatricals as a safer outlet for the girls' energies. He writes to Sir Ralph: 'Wee had a Diversion here wch was very acceptable to the Ladyes wee Invited, and after that a Collation: to morrow Lady Vaughan, Lady Noel and theire Husbands w^th^ other company will bee here, this is a much cheaper way than to have theire company severally, and more obliging, and there were no fewer than 30 the other day of Gentry; and the like number wee expect to morrow, besides attendants. I did take out of the play what I thought a little immodest & Impertinent, and the Spectators had almost putt them out w^th^ commending them so loud, as they were acting: Carolin being but 14 did act a prince's part (wch is a very long one about 300 lines) beyond all their expectations, and Cary and Pen did theire parts very well, and Peg Gardiner and Ury who acted Harris and Batterson's parts in that play came off with great applause and all w^th^ as little prompting as ever I observed at the Theater, and I think it very unusuall to have it performed in our family. Yr sister and I are more delighted then wee would make shew of, for I am sure without Ingenuity and good memoryes they could not do it so well.'

The disorderly state of the London streets is constantly referred to. In the winter of 1670 Dr.

Denton relates that 'betweene 7 & 8 aclock, 5 or more horsmen dogd ye Duke of Ormond, who went home by ye way of Pal-mal & soe up James' Street, & just as his coach came to ye upper end thereof, on of them clapt a pistoll to his coachman y^{t} if eyther he spoke or drove he was a dead man, the rest alighted & comanded him out of y^{e} coach; he told them y^{t} if it were his money they should have it, soe they puld him out of y^{e} coach, forct him on hors back behind one of them, & away they carried him, my L^{d} havinge recollected himself y^{t} he had gone about 30 paces as he ghessed, (& as he told me himself for I went yesterday morninge to see him) & finding he was hinmost, his foreman havinge his sword & bridle in one hand, & his pistoll in y^{e} other wrested ye pistoll out of his hand, & threw y^{e} fellow downe, fell with him & upon him, & gott his sword & gott loose of them not wth out some other hazards, one pistoll beinge shott att him & two more fired. He is bruised in his ey, & a knock over the pate wth a pistoll as he ghessed, & a small cutt in his head, after all w^{ch} he is like I thank God to doe well. This makes all ye towne wonder, if money had beene their designe they might have had it, if his life, they might have had y^{t} alsoe. Some think & conjecture only, y^{t} their malice & spite was such y^{t} they would have carried him to Tiburne, & have hanged him there. They cannot Imagine whom to suspect for it. The horse they left behind. It was a chestnutt, wth a bald face, & a white spott on his side. He y^{t}

James Butler 12th Earl
afterwards 1st Duke of Ormond
from a painting by Eymont, at Claydon House.

was dismounted gott off in y^e^ dark & crowd.' Dr. Denton reminds Sir Ralph, 'if Ormond do chance to come to you a byled leg of mutton is his beloved dish for dinner.'

Mr. St. Amand is attacked in his coach between Knightsbridge and Hyde Park Gate, robbed of two guineas, some silver and his periwig, and so much injured that prayers are desired for him in Covent Garden Church, where his assailants may well have formed part of the congregation.

Tom Danby, who had married Margaret Eure, was killed about this time in a London tavern 'by one Burrage, an affront at least, if not his death' being planned beforehand. Mun Temple in a similar brawl was knocked on the head with a bottle, and died of his injuries. Sir Ralph had to use all his interest to save Will Stewkeley from the consequences of a drunken quarrel in which a man was murdered, though not by his hand, and he had to retire to Paris for a time. Duels are of daily occurrence, John's letters to Mun are full of them. Mr. Scrope, sitting by Sir Thos. Armstrong at the Duke's playhouse, struck him over the shins twice; both men wished to speak to 'Mrs. Uphill, a player, who came into the house masked. The gentlemen round made a ring, and they fought, Sir Thomas killed Scrope at the first pass; not the first man he had killed, said the bystanders.' The sudden quarrels between intimate friends that end fatally are most startling. Sir William Kingsmill's cousin, Mr. Hazelwood, 'came

Aug. 30, 1675

Nov. 1683

of a visit to see him, they fell out, & it ended in y^e^ death of Mr. Hazelwood, nobody was by but only them two; tis to be hoped y^t^ his sister being at Court may help to save his life.'

Oct. 24, 1683

Nancy Nicholas relates how three young men who were friends—'M^r^ Teret (ye son of a ship captin), M^r^ Foster, S^r^ Hum: Foster's brother, & M^r^ Coney, maid an agrement y^t^ w^ch^ ever of y^m^ first maried, shuld pay to ye other two 200^£^ a pece; now Teret was latly maried & these 2 others came for their money, w^ch^ he would have railed y^m^ out of, but at last it came to blos, ye seconds was M^r^ O'Brian & M^r^ Dean, Teret & Foster both dead upon ye plaice, y^e^ other 4 wounded.'

Lord Cavendish and Mr. Howard disagree about some proceedings in the House, Lord Cavendish sends a challenge which Mr. Howard being sick of the gout cannot take up at once, and my lord posts him at Whitehall Gate for a coward and a rascal; it needed the combined efforts of King, Lords and Commons to put an end to this absurd quarrel. Young Lord Gerard, aged fourteen, takes his mother to see New Bedlam, the drunken porter and his wife are insolent to him, whereupon the lad draws his sword and 'runs the porter into the groin;' the rabble fall upon Lord Gerard and nearly pull him to pieces, thrust him into prison, and then break the windows to come at him again. The Lord Mayor rescues him and shelters him in his house all night. Meanwhile the Countess of Bath driving past 'has

her coach broke to bits & her footman knocked down, being taken for Lord Gerard's Mother.' The plucky boy rouses one's sympathy, but there are worse stories than these.

John Verney writes of Cornet Wroth, who dined with Sir Robert Viner at his country-house, 'and after dinner going an airing with him, drew a pistol on his host, and having six or eight troopers to assist him, carried off Miss Hyde in a coach, a wheel broke and he laid her across a horse, and rode off to Putney ferry where he had a coach and six; the country was roused and the girl was recovered speechless, but the gallant Cornet escaped.' Some of the doings are tragic, some merely foolish. John tells Mun how 'a Quarrell happened at Islington Wells, and swords were drawn, but noe blood, & indeed the falling out between 2 friends was soe silly, that it lookt like an agreement between 'em beforehand. I was present at the sport, which happened in a room where were at least 30 Ladyes very much frightend & most of 'em underfoote, soe that there was fine squeeking and squeeling for a minute or two.' Edmund relates 'a pleasant Passage that Happened t'other day in Barkshire: viz my Ld. Ch. Just: Scroggs Being upon the Roade in his Coach, two Gentlemen on Horseback overtooke Him, and perceiving Him a sleepe, One of Them sayd to the Other I will Rowse Him with a Trick: and so Having Such a Baston in his hand as I use to Ride with, smote the Toppe of his Coach with it mighty Violently, &

Cryed out with a Loud Voyce A Wake Man severall Times, and so Galloped away with speed.'

There were problems enough to occupy the minds of thoughtful men, the price of food was rising, and the poor were sinking into deeper poverty. Sir Matthew Hale, amongst others, was occupied with a scheme for giving work to the unemployed, when he died on Christmas Day, 1676. Edmund

Jan. 4, 1677

writes: 'That incomparably Learned & upright Man & Just, Judge Hales it seems is dead to us, & gone without question unto a better Place, though He will be more missed then any man in England except His Majesty, for he hath not left his fellow behind him. Therefore I cannot choose, but condole a Losse so considerable & universall to my Country, for the Newcastle Duke & Lady Duras & Latimer's still-born sonne, They are nothing to you or I. or any Body Else besides a few private friends of their owne. My Cosen Greenfield of Wotton I heare is Dying also & that signifies as little, & so the death of Cuff Emerson is as inconsiderable, he was father to young Mistress Hide's husband & lately died of the small-pox.'

Jan. 3, 1677

'Heere are 2 or 3 stories,' Sir Ralph writes, 'about Judge Hales foretelling the time of his Death; in the maine, I beeleeve them true, but the circumstances are told variously, & are too long for a letter, . . .' 'I am persuaded,' Mun replies, 'that such an excellent vertuous Man as Honest Judge Hales might have the spirit of Prophecie given him,

to prophecie anything according to the Analogie of faith.'

Mun was seriously ill in London in the summer of 1677; as soon as he could be moved he went with Sir Ralph and John to the Stewkeleys.

'Preshaw Ho. puts me in mind of the loaves & fishes,' writes Dr. Denton, 'it increases & Multiplies with the company.' Lady Smith had arrived with two daughters, a chaplain, two maids, three in livery, and six horses; 'if rightly informed there was but one guest-chamber & how to provide roome for 65 is next to Miracilous. I doubt not of the mirth & entertainment, but I am sure I could not be contentedly merry in any crowd.' Lady Gardiner is so happy in the good company of her brother and his sons, 'which made up a most pleasant harmony,' that when they leave her, she writes: 'Our naighbours lament our soden chang, for all heare looks like the novesis when thay put of ther gorgeous cloths, and put on ther nun's habits.' Sir Roger wrote one of his affectionate letters, inviting Sir Ralph and his sons 'once more to come together & visit poore Wroxall, where I think to spend a good part of the next summer if we are not by some cross providence prevented;' he was staying with Daughter Guyon at Yeldham on his way to Sutton for the winter. He is very unhappy at the conduct of public affairs, which has left 'the enemie at liberty to come & cut our throats at our very doors.'

Aug. 30, 1677

Aug. 20, 1677

Shortly after came a letter to Sir Ralph from Dr.

Sept. 25, 1677

Henry Paman of St. John's, Cambridge: 'Sir, you had rec[d] from me the sad newes of dear Sir Roger Burgoyne's death . . . but I was not very willing to speake of my owne sorrow for soe great a losse. If anything could have given him courage enough to live, it was the seeing of Dr. Denton, who came by chance, but hee thought him sent immediately from Heaven & was extremely pleased to see him. He did very often in his sickness entertain me with discourse of you, & how excellent a friend he had in all occasions found you.' Dr. Denton had called in on his way from Ely, and found his old friend in 'a world of danger,' 'he is very earnest with me not to leave him, I told him I durst not for feare you would never forgive me if I did.' He writes to Sir Ralph again, that Sir Roger died on the 16th, having taken to his bed ten days before, 'his first care was that you might know it & noe man so much in his thoughts as you, with the kindest expressions & acknowledgments imaginable.' The good old man had long described himself as 'a Tattered Vessell;' his eldest son had made a happy marriage with Constance Lucy of Charlecote, his affairs were in order, and in these last days he spoke of himself as 'Well, very well, only weak.' 'If I should doubt his happiness,' the doctor wrote, 'I know not whose I should be confident of.' The old doctor himself had been wildly imprudent. His health had not been 'current of late.' 'I gott noe good att Sturbridge Faire by oysters, fresh herrings, varieties of wine & beare, the

Sept. 18, 1677

same befell Sir Roger as they say, as likewise to his father also before him.'

Through all the convulsions of the State Sir Roger had kept the even tenor of his way, sympathising with popular progress, and for himself, content to do the duty next at hand with all his might. 'I envye not the highest cedars, but am content to be a shrubbe, valueing much more safety than the greatest honour, for cottages may stand when pallases fall.' Sir Ralph spoke of him as 'the joy and comfort of his friends and Family, and certainly the best husband, the best father, and the best friende in the world.' Sir John Burgoyne begs Sir Ralph to accept of cloth for a mourning suit, and to order it of Mr. Lovell at the Cock in Bedford Street. Sir Ralph is not pleased, 'this seemes a little Odd to me, that I must send for it, certainly the custome is to send it to one's owne house, or Lodging, I am sure I never knew it otherwise, nor shall I send for it, nor take any notice of it in my answere to his letter.'

The last office of friendship which Sir Ralph can perform for Sir Roger is to design the monument, which the widow wishes to put up over the family pew in Sutton Church. He gives the matter his most careful attention, and entrusts the work to Grinling Gibbons, whose signature and seal are appended to the specification. Sir Peter Lely, Kt., and Hugh May, Esquire, are to decide, when the monument is complete, whether 100*l.* or 120*l.* should be paid for it, but the payment is not in any case to

exceed the latter sum, 'the overvalue being for the credit of the said Greenlin Gibbons at his own offer'—which sounds more like the deed of a generous artist than of a man of business.

In a letter of Sir Ralph's to John there is a touching reference to the anniversary of the battle of Edgehill: 'You know that to morrow senite is the 23. October, & how I keepe that day, therfore were you now heere, I canot begin my Jorney till that day is over, soe that you need not make over much hast in your coming downe.'

A new figure appears in the letters this autumn; William of Orange arrives in England, and has been with the King at Newmarket; and with the Royalties 'incog. to the revels at Lincoln's Inn.' Dr. Denton writes: 'Ye match w^th^ Lady Mary & ye Prince was Concluded last Sunday night; on Munday ye Councill, L^d^ Maior, &c went to congratulate her, & y^t^ night of Bells & Bonfires good store. . . . D^r^ Lloyd of S^t^ Martins goes w^th^ Lady Mary for some few months to settle her chappell. A Greeke church hath beene long a buildinge in St. Giles feilds, it goes on slowly.'

Oct. 25, 1677

Lady Hobart writes: 'All the news hear is of the Lady Mary's mach; tis gret joy to all the sety & everybody. She and Duck, Duchis and Lady Ann set and cry 2 or 3 houres together, thay ar loth to part.' The bells and bonfires were for the betrothal, the marriage itself took place on the 5th of November; the tears shed would have been bitter indeed, could any

Oct. 25, 1677

of the family party have foreseen that the bridegroom would invade his father-in-law's kingdom, on the anniversary of this joyful wedding day. Guy Fawkes' day was kept by the Verneys as 'gunpowder Jack's' birthday.

'We all remember ye date on the 5th inst.' Nancy writes to him, 'our Prince of Oring behaved himself like a generall as well under his canopy of peace, as he doeth under yt of war & is an active dancer on ye ropes, & his prety lady seemeth prety well plesed. Ye formality of Maridg was performed by ye Bp. of London, Sunday night 9 a clok.' The Prince would not submit to the customs then usual on such occasions, '& the Duke desired ye company all to withdraw.' Nancy considers that 'the Prince performed ye part of an able man for the honnor of the dutchmen,' but he was not popular in town. Society pronounced him to be 'the plainest man ever seen & of no fashion at all.' Nov. 7, 1677

In the Verney letters the old jealousy of a standing army is warmly expressed, yet when troops are wanted for the war with France in 1678, Edmund writes: 'The Drums beat up last Saturday at Alesbury for Volontiers, but not a man came in to list, altho' they might have been under Wisedome's conduct, whereby it playnely appears, the spirit of the nation is down, or elce we are not the Men we fancy ourselves to be, for I have heard Many say if we had war with the French that vast Multitudes would go against them, but for my part I see no Mar. 18, 1678

such thing, if people in other parts of Eng[d] are as backwards as in our Country & Wallingford where I myself frighted most of the young fry into Holes & Cellars, with only walking up & down the streets, being taken for a Presse-Master. If there is a shower of blood at Orleans, it is a sign of Much Effusion of Blood in France, those prodigies sent from Heaven never come in vaine.'

'I think Collonel Legg Hath made a good Choyce in Craddock the Butcher for a Captaine in his Regiment. I know the Man and Have sene Him ffight Prizes, He is a stout Man and a Neat Gamester: when I am a Collonell I will also Choose my Master Druse a Gladiator of Alisbery, who Hath ffought with Cradock and Worsted Him, for one of my Captains.' He laments that 'the overflowing scum of our nation is listed' and that 'the better sort of Men will not come in voluntarily unless they like their officers very well. In Northamptonshire men come in pretty thick to be enrolled under Lords Brian & Peterborough. Capt. Wisedome can get none at Ailesbury but "Gaolbirds, thieves & rogues."'

Mun has no doubt that he could raise 'both Horse & Foot for his majestie's service as good men number for number as any he hath,' he is willing to serve 'provided he has his own terms not otherwise.' When the troops are paid off the following year there is still more discontent. 'The troopers of Buckingham were disbanded by Sir John Busby, Sir Harry Andrws, my old Cozen Stafford & Captain Lovett.

Jan. 20, 1679

My L[d] Latimer was also there & the Troopers were extremely angry with him & swore they would never serve under him again, nor fight for King Charles & a many of them sayd they would robb, for home they durst not goe. The King & Dukes Guards 15 in number that passed & repassed here the other day carryed the money to pay them off. Theyr fire armes are sent up to London by one Webb a caryer.' The men are selling their 'very good buff belts for 18[d] a peece.' 'I never remember this country so infested with rogues as it is now, last Thursday 3 or 4 of them stood with theire swords drawne in my Ridge way wch leads to Buck[m], they were on foot yet very fine in apparell & had Cloakes . . . they meant to robb H. Scott's house but the market-folkes passing theire hearts failed them. . . . I Heare Sr John Busby Doth ffancy Himselfe a great Commander, Having Gott two smale ffeild peices of about 3 inches Bore, wch were Sr Anthony Cope's, and are to be discharged often against Stow & Claydon: These are Thundering Peeces of Mortality wch Do no wayes affright, nor can possibly Daunt Yr most affectionate Kinesman & Servant, Edmund Verney.'

He makes some curious references to the Guards: July 16, 1677
'I wonder much How any One can Think, because I sayd I would Have a sute à la soldate, that consequently I must Be in the Kings Livery, wch He prescribes his Guardes to weare, for my part if I were of Them, I should Hardly weare it upon Duty, unlesse particularly commanded by his Majesty, and

Then I must obey especially if I Take his Pay: for though I carry a souldiers Mind yet I Hate any servile Badge, Neither Do I understand the Livery w^ch^ He makes his peculiar Guardes weare, to Be the only Patterne Becomming all other Souldiers to ffolow in their Habits, for thats as Every One ffancys, so That There is no necessity for the Generality of Martiall Men to ffall into such Extremes as to Be in the Kings Guardes peculiar Livery, if they will weare a Habit souldier like: and as There are Garbs particularly adapted unto a Souldiers Genius so likewise There are sundry sorts of Habits becomming Souldiers in particular & sic de simili: But for ffeare my Taylour should want skill How to distinguish the severall Differences, I will Direct Him to make me a Hansom sute fitt for Winter & to Appeare in any Christian seraglio. I intend to have two Liverys like yrs, though I shall Travell but w^th^ one, for when I am Returned Home I Resolve to Bind Nedd Smith Apprentice, Then I'll Keepe But Two Livery Servants, w^ch^ to Keepe in different Liverys were somewhat preposterous.'

Jan. 29, 1680

The allusion to the Scots Guards is still less respectful: 'The D: of Y: Hath Been Very unhappy to Himself & to These Nations: I wonder He should Desire the Scotch to Build a Church, for if I Mistake Them not, They are more like to Pull Downe Churches then Build any: & I wonder as much that He should desire a Scotch Guard for his Person: Hath He fforgot How that

People sold his most Excellent ffather : and if He doth Remember that Peece of Judasisme, can He imagine They will Be Truer to Him, if He do, He Hath a Better ffaith in Them than I.'

Sir Ralph tells Mun that he thought no gentleman would ever wear 'the habit of the Officers of the Guarde, but now I heare a Baronet of Suffolk did last week wear it in Whitehall, which made soe greate a Laughter in the Court & at this End of the Towne that I beleeve 'twill never bee done againe by any Man in this age. . . . You shall give me your picture in a Buff Coate, or in armour with all my heart, but not in a sute, like the Officers of the Guard.' 'I do not understand How the Granadiers can Doe any considerable Execution with fflying Hand Granadoes on Horseback,' his son writes again, 'w^ch^ makes me wonder that his Majesty can Have so great a ffancy for that sort of souldiery.' July 16, 1677

Mun writes that 'The ffrench King Takes upon Him to Lord it Everywhere, if the States of Holland Dare not make Alliances without his Approbation, They are but his Vassals, and not Souveraigne High and Mighty, as they usually Stile Themselves. I am sure if They consider their owne safety & the Interest of the Protestant Religion, They cannot Doe Better then to make a Strickt League with us, and other Protestant Potentates, and Lay aside theyr Jealousies and Hatred of the Prince of Orange.' 'I am sorry for the Poore Men that were drowned in y^e^ ffrench Man of War that lately Perisht, But I wish July 30, 1679

all this french Kings Ships at the Bottom of the Sea and Lost for ever.' English feeling had changed much since the enthusiastic welcome given to Madame: the country squires were sickened with the subserviency of the Court to Louis XIV.

Nancy Nicholas tells a queer story as current about town: 'Our King sent people over to Calais,' and the King's corncutter went with them 'because he could speak French, and they bore his charges and gave him 2 guineas for his reward. So y^e^ French K satt at Dinner in a great room & y^e^ L^d^ Sunderland dyned att y^e^ table w^th^ y^e^ K, & ye L^d^ duras & all Inglish gentillmen satt at a nother table in y^e^ same room, w^th^ great men of France y^t^ ware to be to enterten y^e^ beter sort of English; & y^e^ ordinery English men ware caried to y^e^ side table to drinke & all in y^e^ same roome w^th^ y^e^ French K: a French man began ye K: of France's helth so ye Corn cutter he swore he would drinke his health for it was his own master's, for he was K: of En^d^ Fr: & Scot & Ierland, & he spoke it so loud y^t^ y^e^ K: heard, & asked who it was, & he had his bags on him & they said it was a buffon of England, so y^n^ he took a glas of win & said he would begin a health & that, he said, was to ye King *in* france.'

When Sir Ralph heard that the French army was saved 'from a total rout by the Imperialists,' by the valour of the English and Scotch in their service, he could only lament that 'they lost not theire lives in a cause more pleasing to the generality of theire owne Nation.'

Walker & Boutall sc.

Anne Lee

Wife of Thomas afterwards 1st Marquis of Wharton

from a painting by Sir P. Lely at Claydon House.

Sir Ralph's hereditary friendship with the Lees of Ditchley involved him in a great deal of correspondence. He had known five Sir Henry Lees, and had been their trustee, guardian, executor, friend, adviser and referee, and to their widows after them, their children and grandchildren. He was now busy winding up his guardianship of the two charming Lee heiresses, who were nearly of age, Anne Mrs. Tom Wharton, and Eleanor Lady Norreys, afterwards Countess of Abingdon. They had been almost like Sir Ralph's daughters, as their husbands gratefully recognised. 'My Lord Tirrises son is gon after Mrs. Lee, but tis said in London, Sir Ralph is resolved L^d^ Wharton's son shall have her.' Lord Norreys wished the remembrance of the great services he had done his wife and her estate could be as firmly entailed on it, 'as they shall be always faithfully acknowledged by me.' Old John Cary still transacts the business of the family; he writes, when Sir Ralph is invited to Rycote, 'I pray do not thinke of trouble to my Lord Norreys, for he will be very glad of your company & bidd you very wellcom, & so will his good Lady: You catch me with a why-not still: Indeed my memory growes bad, very bad, & things go out as fast as they come into my head now, I am walkeing (as well as others) apace towards the land of forgetfullness & cannot help it, it must be,—Happy are those who are fit for that day.'

One of the Ditchley ladies, with whom Sir Ralph constantly corresponded, was Anne St. John, widow

of Sir Henry Francis Lee, and after the death of her second husband he was guardian of her son, the notorious Lord Rochester. The names read strangely in conjunction, the grave Sir Ralph with his austere morality and fastidious tastes, and the handsome youth with his wild genius, defying all authority human and divine, 'for five years together continually drunk,' leading the mad revels at Court, or practising physic as a mountebank on Tower Hill, with equal 'exactness & dexterity.' No hen at the edge of a pond could have been more helpless as a guardian, and it was only in deference to Lady Rochester's earnest entreaties that Sir Ralph consented to retain his ungrateful position. But all his reckless self-indulgence had been unable to quench Lord Rochester's lovable qualities, and those about him accepted his repentance with eagerness when 'he came to himself.'

In June 1680 Lord Rochester is very ill, he is advised to drink ass's milk, and Sir Ralph is, of course, to find the ass. Mr. Cary writes feelingly to Sir Ralph at every stage of his illness. 'I much feare my Lord Rochester hath not long to live, he is here at his lodg & his Mother my lady dowager & his lady are with him, And doctor Short of London & doctor Radcliffe of Oxon. Himselfe is now very weake, God Almighty restore him if it be his will, for he is growne to be the most altered person, the most devout & pious person as I generally ever knew, & certainly would make a most worthy brave

man, if it would please God to spare his life, but I feare the worst, at present he is very weake & ill. But what gives us much comfort is we hope he will be happy in another world, if it please God to take him hence, And further what is much comfort to my Lady Dowager & us all in the midst of this sorrow is, his Lady is returned to her first love the protestant religion, And on Sunday last received the Sacrament with her lord, & hath bin at prayer with us, so as if it might please God to spare & restore him, It would altogether make upp very great joy to my lady his mother & us all that love him.'

He reports a fortnight later that 'My lord Rochester we hope is on the mending hand, but many changes he meets withall, pretty good dayes succeed ill nights, which help to keep upp his spirits, but he is very weake, and expresses himselfe very good, I hope God will spare him for his owne service for the future.' 1680 June 15,

On July 18 'My lord Rochester continues very weake, he is sometimes a little lively & gives good hope of his recovery, but anon downe againe, which makes us much to feare the worst.' On the 26th he is dead; his young widow and 'my little Lord,' the last of his line, follow him to the grave before three years are out, and Sir Ralph lives to see his very name granted to another.

In contrast to Rochester's life, even amongst men of fashion, we have a contemporary description[1] of

[1] *Life of Judge Jefferies*, by Woolrych.

an accomplished young man, who afterwards suffered in Monmouth's rebellion: 'his body made so very handsome and creditable a tenement for his mind, it had been pity it should have lived in any other. All that knew or saw him must own, Mr. Battiscombe was very much a gentleman. Not that thin sort of animal that flutters from tavern to playhouse and back again, all his life made of wig & cravat, without one dram of thought in his composition—but one who had solid worth.'

It is evident that the average English home was untouched by the manners of the Court, and the coarseness of literature and the drama, and Dr. Chamberlain's account is entirely borne out by the Verney letters: 'A Wife in England,' he writes, 'is *de jure* but the best of Servants, having nothing her own in a more proper sense than a child hath . . . notwithstanding all which, their condition *de facto* is the best in the World, for such is the good nature of Englishmen towards their Wives, such is their tenderness & respect giving them the uppermost place at Table & elsewhere, the right hand everywhere, & putting upon them no drudgery & hardship; that if there were a Bridge over into England. . . . it is thought all the Women in Europe would run thither.' Such a home was John Verney's.

It was natural that John's success in whatever business he undertook should be more sharply contrasted as the years went on with Edmund's slovenly management of his estate, and growing indebted-

ness; but Edmund's affectionate and generous nature might seem to entitle him to a larger share of domestic happiness than his colder and more prudent brother. But it was not so. After long deliberation and some false starts, John's choice of a wife proved as superior to Edmund's as his judgment of the value of any other commodity; and Mrs. John Verney is at this time by far the most attractive woman in the family.

The negotiations preceding John's marriage with Elizabeth, the eldest child of Ralph Palmer of Little Chelsea, and of his wife Alice White, are characteristic of the man. He objects to pay a single guinea that can be saved on the settlements; Sir Ralph tells him that 'Lawyers' clerks on these occasions use to bring in their bill as Apothecaries doe, but the Drs. are feed by discreation & soe are Lawiers; Sir Gabriel Roberts can best tell you what young Marchants use to doe' . . . 'but in these things there is noe certainty, some aske more & some lesse according to the quality of the Client, or their owne greedinesse & we never use to dispute with them.' Eventually Sir John Coell refused the five guinea fee which John 'prest him extreamly to take, saying he owed Sir R. V. so much he could not but doe anything for him.'

The difficulties were not on one side only. Mr. Palmer speaks so high, and makes so many stipulations, that John is at length forbid the house. 'A little of your advice Pray Sir,' he asks Sir Ralph, 'for

we are now on a punctilio of honour.' To his mistress he writes sadly, yet accepting his dismissal. 'I suppose your worthy father casts in this bone out of the abundance of his love towards you, as being unwilling to part with so beloved a creature. Madam, my whole life never mett with any Cross that went so much to my heart as this hath done. I have one favour to begg of you, that is a lock of your Delicate haire, who am too wretched I feare to expect a line from your sweet hand. And now Dearest Madam, I must (with heart-breaking) bidd you for ever adieu; and I pray God that all the felicityes that at any time attended the happiest of your Sex may be heaped on you: May you live plentifully many contented yeares in this world & have Eternall blessings in the next, these be the hearty prayers of Madam,

Your Ladiship's Passionate Lover & most
unfortunate Servant, JOHN VERNEY.

I have no hopes of happiness unless you'le contribute. My father honours you highly and is very much Yr Servant.'

Nancy Nicholas, in her mocking humour, tries to cheer him up by the assurance that 'E.P. has ferret eyes, and a thousand pimples,' but John fires up so fiercely in defence of his lady's complexion, that the calumny is withdrawn; and peace is concluded on the understanding that E.P. has but three small spots on her face, which are common after an ague, and that her eyes are of unusual size and beauty.

When we hear again, John is providing himself

'with good clothes & store of Trimming to furnish the Comp^{y} with favours, wch I thinke are 90 odd knotts on my wedding sute.' He writes to his father on his wedding day, 'I am this morning going down to Westminster Abby to meet M^{rs} Eliz. Palmer, where after prayers we designe to be Married in Henry 7^{ths} Chappell by Dr. Adam Littleton (where he's a prebend) very privately in our old clothes, none will be at it but her father, mother, brother & Aunt J. White, from thence we goe to the Rummer [or Romer] in Soper Lane in the City, whither I invite them & Dr. Littleton to dine with me,[1] after dinner to visit my Lady Gardiner, whence to be gone about 5 or 6 a Clock, then goe eate a Tart at the treating house by Knightsbridge & soe goe home together about 9 at night when all their neighbours may be within their doors.' It sounds a very tiring programme for the poor little bride—who had not quite completed her sixteenth year—to be driven

May 27, 1680

[1] The bill of John Verney's wedding dinner for seven persons 'at the Rummer in Queen Street London.' May 27th. 1680.

		s.	*d.*
Beer-ayle	0	3	0
Wine	0	11	0
Orings	0	1	0
A dish of fish	1	0	0
2 Geese	0	8	6
4 fatt Chikens	0	8	0
2 Rabets	0	3	0
A dish of peese	0	6	0
8 hartey Chokes	0	5	0
A dish of Strabreys	0	6	0
A dish of Chereys	0	5	6
	3	17	0

Servants 1*s*.

about all day from the early morning. They paid Aunt Gardiner their visit, 'leaving her as innocent as they found her,' 'keeping the news within our own doors from Thursday to Sunday, when wee shall owne it publiquely by our clothes in Chelsey Church and then to be sure all their neighbouring acquaintance of both the Chelseys will come in.' The bride and bridegroom write a charming little letter to Sir Ralph with their joint signatures to tell him that they have now 'performed that grand concern which entitles us both to be your children.'

They drive 'into London to pay visits,' and John sends Sir Ralph 'a Paper Box directed to you though most in it is for my Brother's family: It contains as followeth,—In a paper seal'd a Paire of white Gloves and a Payre of Collourd Gloves laced with Black flanders lace, which I desire your acceptance of, And if ye fingers be too long for you, Thom: Hobart sayth he will alter them for you when in towne. All Genoa Gloves are long fingerd. A payre of Green fringed Gloves for my Brother; White & Collourd Lace Gloves for my Sister; Pinke Coulourd trimd Gloves for Master Ralph; Skye Coulour'd trimd Gloves for Master Munsey; White Gloves trimd with Green &c for my little neece, And one of my wife's Wedding Garters for Master Ralph as one of her Bridemen. These tokens of a Wedding I desire them to weare for my sake.'

June 9, 1680

Mrs. John Verney is never mentioned in the letters without some affectionate epithet. Child as

Elizabeth Palmer
1st Wife of John Verney
from a painting by Sir Peter Lely
at Claydon House.

Elizabeth Verney

she was, she at once took the place in the family which the eldest son's wife had never been able to fill. She visited the school-boys of the family at Harrow, and mothered the tall nephews at East Claydon of her own age, as she did her undergraduate brother at Oxford, who poured out to her all his confidences and was proud to entertain her in his rooms at Trinity College. To her forlorn little niece, Molly Verney, she was specially kind, sending down 'a Paste-Board Chimney & all the implements with it, in a box for little Misse,' at seven years old; and when she was in her teens, looking after her clothes and her studies at Mrs. Priest's genteel establishment for young ladies at Chelsea, where the girl is said to improve wonderfully.

Her gracious kindness makes her home 'over against the coffee-house in Hatton St. Hatton Gardens,' a happy meeting place for all the young ones of the family. She packs her coach to its utmost capacity, to take the Stewkeley girls to the 'Grand Ball at Chelsey School,' where Moll Verney and Betty Denton distinguish themselves as dancers: 'I wish you could have seen "pretty Miss,"' she writes to the latter's flighty mother, Hester Denton.

Sir Ralph was her devoted servant, and her grave and matter-of-fact husband, some twenty-five years older than herself, never ceased to be her lover during the six short years of their married life. He commissioned Sir Peter Lely to paint her portrait. During their rare separations, their letters reveal

the depth of tender sentiment which underlay the cautious reserve of the worldly-wise man of affairs. He writes to her while she is paying some family visits in Bucks and he is in charge of the first baby.

Sept. 24, 1681

'Dearest Deare, I wrote you this morning by the Coach Since which I have receaved your pretty lines under the 22th and for your tender Expressions there is nothing but a reciprocall love can make you returns, and that be confident you have: Pretty Pretious is grown much, and her nurse to that degree of bigness that you can't Immagine. . . . I have put up in a paper Box directed to you, your Black Crape Manto, to dress you in when the mornings are cold. . . . Make much of your deare selfe and 'twill doe comfort to me then, to heare of your wellfare and pleasure. My Mother hath bought ye Child a Morelly Coate Striped Yellow & Black'— which sounds very unbecoming to a baby's complexion—'and Some lace for Capps, that wch you left being, as she thought, too narrow. She hath put that on under it I thinke. I hope you were made much of at Hillesden, Radcliff & Stow, otherwise the Ladyes there loose there reputation with me. Pray Send one of yor Shoes to Alesbury or Buckm to have a pare of Cloggs fitted to it, that you may walke about without takeing in Wett at your feet & what letters you receave from me either burn 'em or locke 'em up in ye little cabinett: I thanke you for your ten thousand kisses and wish I had one halfe dozen from you in ye mean time; but for this

vacancy we'll have y^e^ more when I returne to you whom God preserve. I rest your Truly loveing and most affectionate Deare J^ne^ VERNEY.

'I have had my hare cutt.'

Mrs. John sends him excellent reports of the business matters which are referred to her in his absence; she is much in request, but refuses invitations, only supping with her husband's old aunts, who delight in her company; 'all pleasure to me I find is nothing without you. . . . After church my cousens Stewkley sent for me to goe to Spring Gardens, with them & M^rs^ Dickenson, with a consort of Musick of Jack Stewkley's bringing, I thanked them but I did not care to goe because of M^rs^ Dickenson, but if she had not bin there I should not have gon with so many wild young men as there was, & had need take care who one gos abroad with these times. . . . I rest your most affectionate but maloncoly wife till your return E. V.' June 25, 1683

'Deare Heart,' he replies, 'I thanke you for your newes & for writing a long letter, for I could be all day reading your lines. . . . Now to employ you.' Here follows a list of commissions with such minute directions as Sir Ralph was wont to give Mary forty years before. His wife is to prepare for a guest. Nedd, his father's 'under butler & pheasant keeper,' is coming up from Claydon to fetch John's horses, and he is to stay three or four days that their man Robert may show him the town; he is not to sleep with him however, 'first because of Robert's sore June 28, 1683

throat & 2^{ly} because that Bedd is but small & Nedd is grone bigg, soe it will not hold them . . . he is your acquaintance soe I need not bid you make him welcome.'

June 28, 1683

'Dearest Joy,' she writes to him when he was going on from Claydon to look after her farms at Wasing, 'I hope you will make no long stay, for I long to se thee, I would not live this life allways without you for all the world. My duty to Sir Ralph and tell him I wish myselfe with him.' He sends her in return 'everything that the Lovingest of husbands can express to the best of wives, & love to the little ones not forgetting the kicker in the dark.'

'Dearest,' he writes again, 'I'me very Sorry John my Coachman Should be soe greate a Clowne to you & soe Sullen now I am from home; but t'is the nature of the Beast. I was so angry about it that I did presently agree with one here who is not a sightly fellow, but I thinke he is a better natur'd man then John, but (doe not speake of it to anybody,) he never drove a Coach but once, but he is a very good Cart or Waggon driver & hath of a long time had a mind to live with me. . . .

'Pray as often as you see our Excellent Father & Mother let them have my Duty, with Love & Service to the rest of that family: & Blessing to my Children: and for thyself I send thee all the Kindness & Love which can be Expresst by

your Deare JN. VERNEY.'

Amongst Sir Ralph's child-friends, John's four little ones—Elizabeth (*b.* 1681), Mary (*b.* 1682), Ralph (*b.* 1683), and Margaret (*b.* 1685)—held a very special place in his heart. They were bright, attractive children, and every incident in their lives was reported to their grandfather. The eldest girl was his godchild, the old doctor stood as his proxy, and wrote to Sir Ralph after the christening: 'As I have promised & vowed that y^r^ marvellous pretty Girle "Betty Verney" shall forsake the Divill & all his works, soe be sure y^u^ take care thereof when I shall be gathered to my ffathers.' Margaret is named after her grandmother, Mun and Nancy Nicholas and Hester Denton are the gossips. Cary wishes her a boy, 'for I find our sex is not much vallued in our age, bot before 'tis a woman I hope they will be better esteemed.'

The father and grandfather were in real distress when the 'footboy Harry being about the coach with Ralph who was in it, shut the Coach door upon the Child's fingers, quite pull'd off one of Ralph's nailes off of his fingers with some little bruises.' The hero of this adventure had now reached the mature age of three, and the family had scarcely recovered the shock of the death of Ralph, Mun's eldest son, when little Ralph and his elder sister Mary fell dangerously ill. John's anxieties were divided between them and his wife, who was looking sadly thin and worn; he tried to persuade her to go to Claydon while he remained in charge of the little ones. Sir Ralph,

who was afraid of infection and fatigue for both of them, wrote urgently to John. 'I wish my Daughter were here & you with her, for you can do nothing about your children, 'tis not a Man's employment, but Woemen's work, & they both understand it & can performe it much better then any Man can doe. A good nursekeeper is better then Ten men, therefore think uppon it before you resolve to stay with them, & God direct you for the best.'

'Molly and Ralph continue as they were, very ill of a feaver & pains with a short Cough very fast, they will not tell where their paines are, nor will they take anything but small Beare, nor that if anything be mingled with it, that we have trouble enough. Those things that they love so very well when in health as Sugar, Candy, Pruines etc. they will not now touch, nor will they let the Doctors touch theire hands, but pray that neither their Unkle Dr. nor Mr. Gelthorpe the Apothecary may not come to 'em. God be theire Phisitian,' writes the distracted father, '& spare their lives.'

Edmund at Claydon cannot hold out hopes that they will be 'Cured Hereabouts, for all our most able & Eminent Doctors of this Vicinage, Have Left off theyr Practice, & are Growne Vertuous Stoicks.'

The crafty 'Babbies,' who would neither be 'blouded nor vomited,' were perforce left to Nature and 'small Beare,' and falsified their physicians' predictions by making a good recovery. Their mother, whose ailments were less definite, was

gradually getting weaker, although the loving hearts about her failed to recognise any danger.

John keeps up his correspondence with the East, his friend the Pasha of Aleppo is said to have fallen in a great battle with the Poles.

'Our Alleppo letters acquaint us of a fire which hath burnt 3 or 400 shopps & had not abundance of rain fallen ye same night t'would have done much more mischiefe. S^r Thomas Bludworth's eldest son dyed by y^e Inward breaking of a Veine: And Ald^n Burdetts second son is alsoe dead by accident, Thus: Being a Coursing, the Hare refug^d in a hole & he hearing y^e hare squeeke & beleiving a Dogg was gott into y^e refuge, & ye hare within reach, put in his arm, butt something bitt him by the hand, which payn'd him soe much as to force him out of y^e field, home, where he instantly had y^e Doctors & Surgeons but to little purpose for he dyed at 4 a clock in y^e afternoon & was bitt between 8 and 9 the same morning, one or two more are dead of fluxes, This wee account a greate Mortality to heare of at once from that healthy plase.' Feb. 6, 1679

John has become an important man in the City; his prudence carried him through some critical times when 'so many citizens have failed, that the first question every day asked is, Who is broke to-day?' Mar. 30, 1676

'The great discourse of the town is of Tompson & Nelthorpe the bankers who are failed. . . . Hynde & his partners have refused further payments. . . . the like is said of some others wch I am glad of, for

I would have all bankers broke, they ruining the trade of the whole kingdom.' Besides his shares in the Levant and East Indian Companies, he is in the Guinea trade, and when the Royal African Company 'has become as poor as a courtier,' John goes down to Windsor with Sir Gabriel Roberts. They have

July 14, 1679 'some discourse with Sec: Sunderland & afterwards with his Majestie, about the Company's business.' They witness 'the Portugal Ambassador's public audience before the K. and Qu. together, after morning chapel, & their dinner in public.' The Company is conducted with old-fashioned honesty; 'we cannot have 1^{d} dividend, but we pay off our debts that if the Co: be broke nobody may be sufferers but those that are of it.' John considers that English commerce is ruined, by politicians meddling in merchants' affairs, 'for they like a flood break down all;' and in his bitter complaints of the interference of Parliament and of the favour shown to the Dutch, he might be in the 'moral meridian' of Rhodesian politics to-day. There is some money left in the City nevertheless, for the people throng and press to see

Nov. 3, 1679 'the rich clothes and jewels worn by the Lady Mayoress,' who has a famous 'collar of pearls, each as big as the top of one's finger.'

To return to the public events of the time. Bucks shared with the rest of the Kingdom, the excitement caused by Titus Oates' pretended discoveries, and an engraved stone at Oatlands that 'Oats shall save this land from destruction' was

quoted by Edmund as containing a political prophecy rather than a simple agricultural fact. Sir Richard Temple disbelieved in Oates from the first, and was called a Jesuit for his pains. Edmund writes from East Claydon to John in London: 'I perceive by yours of the 20th That abundance of Rogues and Jades are condemned, and are like to suffer according to theyr Demerits: But for ye great Rogues, Jades and Traytors, wch Deserve Death Ten Thousand Times sooner then ye Other, They are like to escape & be Pardonned, wch is a most sadd Thing to Consider upon. Lord Have Mercy upon Us for I wonder How all This will End, I am affrayd very ill.' Oct. 23, 1679

'Yesterday Oates Preacht in forster lane,' John writes, 'where were Greate Crowds of people, more to see then heare him, for some tell me his performance was not Extraordinary.' On November 5 in this year, besides his brother's health, Edmund drinks many loyal toasts to the confusion of Conspirators and Plotters. The Sessions in London were heavier than had been known for 40 years, '20 men & 13 women being condemned to death.' Oct. 27, 1679

Nancy writes: 'We had maney bonfiers heare a boughts & at Tempel bar was burnt ye Lord Shafstbery & Dr Oats, & very unhappily I know not by what means it hapned but ye mobele was very rud to ye Dutch Imbasidor & his wife wch he did not expect shuld be shewed him on ye 5: of Nov.' 'The Pop and Sr Edmond Godfery,' Cary writes, 'was carryed in greatare triumph then evar, from Whithall Nov. 20, 1679

to Somarset hous on Qu. Elizabeth's coronation day, though wee all hard the King sent to my lord Maior to repres it, w^{ch} replyed hee could not hope to due it, the people being fixed to due it, wod bee daingarous to sopres it; parsons of quollity went to see it as thay did my lord Maiors show, bot the pop was burnt at temple bar, and S^{r} Edmund Godfery only carryed to Somarset hous, they say ther was 20,000 attended this show all day and expected to bee soprest by the gards and declared they wod stand on ther defenc but all was quiat.' John writes that there were 100,000 spectators, and that the King witnessed the pageant from a goldsmith's window; that the devil appeared attended by boys in surplices, with a train of bishops, cardinals and friars, with bell, book and candle, &c. 'On Queen Eliz^{s} birth night S^{r} Robert Peyton's Effigy will be burnt with the Pope's By the Rabble, On fryday y^{e} King walked to Hampton Court, & Portsmouth rode in her Coach by him.'

'It would Anger One strangely to consider unto what a ffayre Market of Destruction Wee are Brought, meerely through the Negligence, ffolly, unskillfullnesse & Basenesse of our Pilots, who neither would nor Could save the shipp from sinking and Perishing, notwithstanding They were admonished and Directed How to Do it in Time By the Voyce of the People.'

This very modern sentiment was Edmund Verney's comment on the results of the reign that began with such enthusiasm of popular approval.

Yet in that age of paradoxes Charles II's personal popularity was never greater than during the last few years of his life. The reaction after the frenzied cruelties with which the Popish plot had been avenged, rendered vain Shaftesbury's desperate game to secure the throne for Monmouth; and strong Protestants, like the Verneys, wholly disapproved of the Exclusion Bill, while deploring the Duke of York's conversion to Rome. The King, who stood bravely by his brother in all his unpopularity, sent him abroad till the storm abated.

Edmund writes to Sir Ralph in the spring of '79, 'That y^r^ Distemper Should Leave you, & the Duke of York, England, much about the same Time, is a Mercy, w^ch^ makes mee Merrily & Trebly Sing, Gaudiamus and Haleluia, and I pray that the One be never suffered to Trouble you more, nor the other this Nation again, and so God Blesse our good King Charles, in whom I Hope There is no Guile.' But the Prince returns sooner than Sir Ralph's distemper: Cary writes from London, 'In stead of the Duck's going for Scotland, hee with the doches and daughters Arived heare last night, Dalavall denton who came with him told mee when they left flanders all ther discours was for Scotland, bot whilst the Duck was coursing on the sees, being tosed with severall winds about, they met with letters from the King to give leve to come this way, And you may esely ges Ingland is more plesent then Scotland, the doches expreses exterordynary joy, she saith she hath not

Mar. 6, 1679

Oct. 13, 1679

had a happy hour since she went out of England. But to come to the sad story of the tims, the Duck of Monmouth came to towne on thursday about one a clok in the morning, and that night had great bonfiars for joy, great numbers stoped coaches to get mony, and hackneys, and maid them fling up ther hats and say God bles Jaims duck of Monmouth, elc thay wod afront them.' John tells how he was stopped in the streets, and when he refused to give the crowd money to drink Monmouth's health 'they cried out a Papist, a Papist. The L^d^ Mayor & Aldermen went to congratulate his Maj^ties^ recovery, the D. of York was by but they took no notice of him, wch he resented; Tis said the K. took my L^d^ Mayor by the hand & welcomed him, at wch my L^d^ M. took him by the other hand & shaking both s^d^ I thank you, I thank you, several times more.' Cary writes 'this great joy is not at Whit hall bot as much angar, for the King will not see him [Monmouth] but in his angar has taken a way all his plases: isterday tis said hee had 200 visitants a great number of the nobilyty. my lord Shusbury and lord hollofax I hard named: tis beleved the great kindness the people shows him maks the king hate him: and tis beleved thay that crys him up dus it only in opposition to the Duck.'

Dec. 1, 1679

'I sent my Girls to court last night to heare news,' Cary writes again, 'wher ther was the greatest court on that acount as has bin seen sinc the plot begon, for usually ther is very fue as I am told, but

iching years carryed many to heare the Duck of Monmouth's dome, w^ch^ most lamented, and some said the duck of monmouth wept when he heard the joy the people exprest, knowing it wod ruing him, the say in court the King sent to him to bee gone on tuesday, bot the duck refueses to goe, on whot acount is severall wayes said: bot the girls tells mee the King looks so very ill as it greved them to see him, and came twice in, bot spok to none bot my lord Fevarsome who came in with him, thay nevar saw man have more discontent and disordar in the looks then the King had; the Queen was brisk and looks well, the new master of the hors came in playing before the King.'

The panic of the Popish plot had made Catherine for a time unpopular. John Stewkeley wrote in June, when there was even a cry of sending her to the Tower: 'The Queen is the subject now of great consultation, whether for Portugal, or a closer place, or the continued favour of him that fears no colours nor is sensible of any Danger; but the Qu. shows herself in the Park & is very merry.'

'T'is a very Crasy Time everywhere,' Mun writes, 'Especially at London. The Duke of Monmouths Comming Back with such generall acclamation and joy & flocking of the People to see & congratulate Him, will Rouse up His Royall Highnesse to Hasten his Ruine, w^ch^ without a Rebellion can not be prevented in all Likelyhood: for His Majesty Hath determined y^e^ succession in the Duke Dec. 7, 1679

of York, with much Reason in my thoughts: I am concerned to see Things Run so violently: But God's will must Be Done.' Amongst Monmouth's personal friends in Bucks was Sir William Smith, to whom he gave his picture; and with whose unstable character and ostentatious ways he had much in common. John writes that 'y^e^ D. of Monmouth was at S^t^ Martin's Church, when he came in all People shew'd him much Civility by rising up, and some Cry'd God blesse y^e^ Duke of Monmouth, I heard say that he then & there Receaved the holy sacrament.'

Dec. 7, 1679

'My lord Gorg the duck of Monmoth's son being sick the King give him leve to goe see him, and sinc his death the duck has leve to be w^th^ the doches at the Cokpit, so many hops hee will come in favour againe, because you shall heare the nues of the towne as well as mee, true or falc, tis said the duck of monmoth sent to the dochis of porchmouth to know why shee was his enymy so much, who answared him shee was so, and wod bee so as long as hee was an Enymy to the King and her, and that hee should find she should bee upheld by all the princes of chrisendome: a brave hicktoring lady; tis said the parlament will set up the duck of Monmoth and will find witnesses to prove his Mother was maryed to the king, to show you the probabillyty of this tis said the Bisshop of Winchester is to bee one of the witnesses, this the Moltytude wod have, so will talk of it though thay ruing him thay love by it. The Dochis of porchmouth calls the

parlament The 500 Clowns; Nelly dus the Duck of Monmoth all the Kindness shee can, bot her interest is nothing.' 'Nell Gwin begg'd hard of his Maj^tie to see him, telling him he was grown pale, wan, lean & long-visaged merely because he was in disfavour; but the King bid her be quiet for he w^d not see him.'

In the midst of the excitement about the Exclusion Bill, Anne Nicholas writes: 'This day our Great Duke Yorke, & his Dutches is gone for Scotland; last saturday ye Lord Fairfax, Cousin Sherard's father in law, was walking in S^t Jeames Park & his hignes did se him & so came to him & took him by ye hand & said to him, Well my L^d I se you are all com up to doe what you can against me; I am ye more sory for y^e occasion, replied yt L^d, but we are all resolved to assert y^e properties of our nation & ye Prodistant Religion; & His Royal Higness replyd again, I will give you all y^e asshurance you can ask y^t I will not disturb y^r propertie; this I ame shuer is a real truth . . . tis said tonight y^t tis the Dutchis of Porchmouth y^t hath sent his hyness on this errant.' Oct. 20, 1680 Cary hears that 'the Duck has a very full and gloryus court in Scotland, the Duck of Monmouth is at the cokpit, bot his dochis is ill, and has reson to bee so for her estat is all drowned by waters in Scotland bot 5000^£ a yeare, and all her fortuns sunk heare at present w^ch maks mee pity her exstremly.'

Nancy Nicholas must have a story to tell Sir Ralph: 'This day in ye house of L^ds saith ye L^d

Clarindon (by a wae of whisper) to L^d^ Shafstbery—"my L^d^ we can never be well so long as y^t^ ill woman ye D. of Porch^th^ is w^th^ our K; so I hope you will give y^r^ helping hand to remove her;" "my L^d^, my L^d^," couth Shafstbery "we are now hunting Tygers & Bairs & Birds of Prey & now you would a Cony-Ketching."' Edmund writes from London on December 30, of a noble quarry hunted to death by Shaftesbury, 'my Lord Stafford was beheaded yesterday & died like a Roman.'

Monmouth was in Bucks in the summer of 1681. Sir Ralph and Edmund were in his company at 'the races on Quainton Meade' which lasted three days; 'Sir R. Temple and Mr. Wharton were there, and many' persons of quality.

Shaftesbury's success in getting up petitions to the King to allow Parliament to meet, drew forth a host of counter petitions, expressing abhorrence of the design to force the King's will. The address of the town of Wycombe[1] 'presented by Dr. Lluellyn to his Maj^tie^ at Windsor upon Bartholomew day 1681,' is a type of the abject loyalty and the flowery language of the Bucks Corporations. They speak of 'the late defeated Politicians,' as 'disappointed of their dark designments by y^r^ Majestie's profound wisdom & divine prevision,' and protest that 'wee have alwayes detested & rejected them, togeather with their now exploded scanty & forsaken abettors. We have ever incerted o^r^ loyall selves amongst the

[1] *History of Wycombe*, by J. Parker.

resolute, grave, & deliberate p'sons. And wee doe most highly applaud the stout fidelios, the strenuous, brisk & valiant youth of this your now much undeluded nation. We therefore, Yo^{r} Mat^{ies} most dutyfull & most devoted subjects entirely p'fesse: That we will to the utmost stresse of o^{r} sinews, to the latest gaspe of our lives, & the last solitary mite in o^{r} coffers adhere to your Ma^{tie}. . . . Many have out stript us in the wing but none shall exceed us in theire wishes; we envye much their more earley apply, but none shall ever appeare more faithfull. . . . God preserve yo^{r} Ma^{tie} from all rebellious Machinacions. Amen.'

The King repaid this adulation by an attack on the municipal charters, which placed the representation of the Boroughs in his hands. The names of the Petitioners and Abhorrers were soon changed into those party titles, which have lasted to the present day. Two years later Mun writes: 'Tho: Smith went with Cosen Denton to Holson Race: where There Happened a Contest Betweene Wigg and Tory, the Later would not contribute to the Plate in case the Duke of Monmouth Didd Runne for it, and the Wigges offered to Make up the summe for it, in case the Toreys would not.' April 16, 1683

When Shaftesbury is tried, Dr. Denton writes, 'Our friend S^{r} W. Smith is of this grand jury, where you know his pregnancy of parts will justly entitle him to be *Dominus fac totum*, & I hear they are finding the K of Poland [Shaftesbury] guilty of high Nov. 20, 1682

treason.' 'I think the Prince [Rupert] was buried
Dec. 4, 1682 on Friday night, but it was no hindrance of the Court going to see the play.'

The City is in an unsettled state, and 'tis a wonder the Cittizens breake soe fast, being England hath had almost all the Trade of the World, sinc the warrs have been in Germany.' John writes to Edmund of a great fire in Constantinople, which has ruined many English traders there, and of a merchant in the City of London he had known at Aleppo, who 'is this weeke broke, and is 2000$^{£}$ worse then nothing; these are misfortunes which you Country Gentlemen are not acquainted with, nor may you ever be, shall be the hearty prayer of yr most aff: brother.'

The influx of skilled foreign artisans, which increased immensely after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, added to the eventual prosperity of the country, but for a time disturbed the labour market; better modes of production in the silk, ribbon, and stocking trades added to the discontent. John writes, 'Here hath been mutinous riseings, by the Weavers on this score, there is of late found out a loome that ridds worke soe fast, that one man with it can doe as much as 20 after the old fashion (by wch meanes all Ribboning would be much cheaper) this they pretend must of necessity ruine many familyes amongst them, soe they will have these new looms burnt, & 2 they served so on Munday, & on tuesday went about ye same worke, but he that expected them, being fitted for a defence

(of his property) kill'd one & wounded two more, whereat ye rest fledd, but yesterday, they return'd to him (who was alsoe fledd) & burnt his loomes in St Geo: fields in Southwarke, these riseings hath made the Watches be doubled all over the citty, besides some Comp^es of ye Trained bands, who every night keep guard on y^e Royall Exchange.' In contrast to the starving weavers, there is the competition of the rich for the possession of a fashionable toy: 'The Lord Geo: Berkely's Elephant (who is 5 foot & 4 Inches high) is to be sold by ye Candle at ye East India house sett up at £1000 & to advance £20 every bidding.' 'When you are all together at Claydon,' Nancy writes to Sir Ralph from Covent Garden, 'you will have no want of the foole of the play—I mean myself—but we have a boundance of Jack-Podings, on our mountybanks staidg in our Squair every day, I hope the new mountibanke may, if nothing els will, be an attraction to you.'

'The Pope's Nuncio would not admit that our Amb^r sh^d sign the Peace at Nimeguen unless Defender of the Faith were left out.' 'Some English & Dutch ships carryed Corn to Civita Vecchia & according to custome all the Dutch Comanders had the Pope's Medalls given to them, but the English Captaines could not get theirs, though that Custome was prest on their behalfe to the Pope. But he would not condescend to it, hee said they weare of a Nation that was without Faith without Conscience & without Law, soe you may see how we stand in his Holiness's

April 16, 1679

favour. But noe Pope in Oliver's time durst have said soe.'

While the long dispute is raging about the succession, the two childless women, Catherine of Braganza and Mary of Modena, have their small rivalries. 'I heare ye Queen & Dutchess are not Cater-Cosins,' John writes, 'ye latter having at Newmarket given ye Country Ladyes leave to come to her in mantos, her Court was every night full, & ye Qu: sate alone. So when ye Fire happed, ye Dutchess & Lady Anne went to ye Queen's doore to attend her, but she sent them out word she would be private. Then they went to L[d] Suffolks whither the Qu' &c being alsoe to goe, said she should fill ye house her selfe, soe ye Dutchess &c removed to Rochester's.'

Mar. 29, 1683

A little later in the spring Sir Ralph's charming friend Eleanor Lee, now Countess of Abingdon, is entertaining the Duke of York with his Duchess and Lady Anne at Rycote, where 'there are 9 choice Cookes to Dresse the Meate.' Mun hears that 'The City of Oxon presented his Highnesse the Duke of Yorke with a payre of Gloves: and the Earle of Abingdon writt to Cosen Denton to come & augment the Splendour of the Cavalcade that accompanied the Duke into Oxford Towne: but Hee went not: The Mayor of Oxon my Cosen Towneshend (Mary Denton's husband) Didd not Go & wayte upon the Duke at his Lodging in Christ Church Colledge, because my Lord Abingdon could not secure Him

May 24, 1683

May 28, 1683

Walker & Boutall ph. sc.

Eleanor Lee, wife of James Bertie
1st Earl of Abingdon
from a portrait by Sir Peter Lely at Claydon House.

that the Mace Should Be suffered to Be Held upp when He Entered into Christ Church colledge, wch it seemes the Bishop would not allow: so he went not to wayte on Him, my Cosen A. Denton went to Ricot to Excuse his not wayting upon my Lord when the Duke made his Entry into Oxford: and Thom: Smith went along with Him.'

'Major Stafford's Eldest Sonne is Dead: and so is Alderman Backwell, So That old and young Go to their Earthly Mansion, when Almighty God pleaseth so to Decree it.'

The unhappy Rye House Plot, discovered in June 1683, again disturbed the peace of the kingdom. Sir Ralph foresees that 'Those few muskets that were found packt upp in my Lord Gray's house, will be reported to be a greate Magazine, & indeed it was too many for a man in his circumstances that can expect noe favour.' When Lord Gray was committed to the Tower, 'he made his escape from the messenger as he was carrying him thither, the messenger is put in the Dungeon & the king is extreamly angry wth him, & with the D. of Monmouth & belives all the Accusation against him.' The plot costs England two precious lives. On July 20, close to the lodgings where Betty Adams stays when she is in town, a scaffold is being erected 'right against the Marquis of Winchester's House, where the wrestlings are used to be in Lincoln's Inn fields,' upon which Lord Russell must suffer on the morrow. June 28, 1683

And so closely do tragedy and comedy jostle

each other in this unhappy time, that while Algernon Sidney is being tried for his life, some mad court
Nov. 26, 1683 ladies, 'The Lady Mary Gerrard, & others, had a frolic to putt on men's aparell, & walke the streets attended with some Gentlemen. In Leicester fields they mett wth a fidler, & I know n^{t} on what provocations, but ye poore man was killed amongst them, tis said they are in ye Gate house.'

Dec. 6, 1683 John writes a few days later: 'Here is no newes but that Coll Sidney is to morrow to dye & tis said ye Whiggs have talkt him out of his life by talking the plot to be at an end & no more should dye for it.' He writes again when the fatal deed is done: 'On Friday Coll Sidney was beheaded on Tower Hill, he dyed a great hero, shewing all the Indifferency Immaginable, he made no Speech, but delivered a paper to Sheriff Daniell (which he hath given to his Majesty, but tis said twill not be printed), He made a very short prayer to himselfe, & was beheaded at one stroke, before the horse Guards came, who were all with ye foote Guards, ordered to encompass the scaffold, & I think the foote Guards were but just on the hill.' 'He met death with an unconcernedness that became one, who had set up Marcus Brutus for his pattern.'

While Rachel Lady Russell wore with so much dignity a 'sorrow's crown of sorrow' to the end of her life, her friend Lady Gardiner, who lost her excellent husband a few months later, was in danger of sinking into 'an old age of cards.' Preshaw House

had been bought by Sir Hugh Stewkeley, and John Stewkeley and his family settled in London, where his chief relaxation during his last years was playing at bowls, 'when he meets at least 40 every night of parsons of good quollity.' After his death in 1684, they moved into a smaller house. Cary 'wants the wherewithal to marry her girls,' they must live 'like nuns,' she says, '& my son as Jack-a-Fryar (not virtuous enofe I fear for the company of women);' their small town-house seems dull and narrow after the cheerful home at Preshaw, and an evening 'abroad' means play. Sir Richard Temple's little daughter Maria is christened on his birthday in the drawing-room. The baby's mother, and the godmothers, Lady Chaworth and Lady Gardiner, are immersed in cards. They leave off gambling 'for 3 or 4 rounds' while the service is actually performed, then fall to it again, oblivious of everything around them. Not content with risking whatever her own poverty could scrape together, Lady Gardiner tries to launch the whole family in fashionable speculations, and to borrow money of her own girls. Sir Ralph supports them in the difficult virtue of resisting their mother, and acts as an outside conscience to Lady Gardiner, though she protests against his absurd scruples. She is deeply in debt, and asks him to lend her 100*l.*

'Deare Sister,' Sir Ralph replies, 'at the sight of your letter it is hard to say whether I was more troubled to read your condition, or to see you insen-

sible that you are the cause of it. I doe not wonder that play (which has ruined soe many Families and soe vast Estates) has reduced you to soe great Extremitys, as almost to see the destruction of Youres. You are noe way qualified for a Gamester, but lie at the mercy of All that play with you. Having so small a Fortune you engage with others of great Estates, and will venture to play with them at a Game too High for you, though not for them! Pardon me Sister, I must needs tell you with a Brother's freedom, that you are now come to the Brincke of the precipice, and nothing cann save you but a timely Retreat. . . . And to show you plainly that I doe not give you this Counsell to save my Money, I promise you the £100 you desire, soe you will first send mee a full & faithful promise under your own hand, to leave off all Gameing and such continuall & extraordinary Visiting, & also to retrench your Household expenses. And if you refuse to gratify mee in this Request, you cannot expect I should comply with yours. For that would be but to furnish you for play, like an ill physician who instead of cureing feedes the Disease.'

March 10, 1685

Cary waxes fierce under the aggravation of such excellent advice. 'You are very sevear, and I cannot bot say unjust to Accus mee of Whot you due not know to bee truth, and of whot I can truly take my oath is falc, and yr Informars divilish lyars that tell you I have bin such a lusar at play. I know the originall of all the ill is said of mee, thay goe about

the earth sekking to mischef me. . . . A Church farissy and an hypocrit may easily ruing any under my sircomstances, bot as low as I am, I scorn them and all thay can due to mee, & wod not goe ovar the thrashold to satisfy yr Informars that has bin so long hatching this mischef. . . . Whot quollyfications A gaimster should have I am A strangare to, bot whot dus becom A gentilwoman as plays only for divartion I hope I know, and shall nevar due no base thing at play, nor no othar way. For my high play I am sure when I play with thos as is of great quollyty, ther is fore of us joyn as one gang, wch is much loware to my shar than whot I usd to play at my cossen Nicholasis, and I nevar played at My Lady Deavonshirs bot thre times, and then my Lady Seamore and my Lady met, and Mrs. Vernon went equall shars with me. . . Tis true I play with my Lady Fits, bot wee often have sherars, tho I am so Insincsible A creture yet I know did I find gameing had bin so prediditiall I had long sinc left it, and why you should injoin me to leve play quite I think is hard, and as hard as I should not visit, sartainly that cannot ruing mee. I know my erour and wher I have out lived myselfe, and that is in hous keeping, and that I confes and will Amend, and thank you for yr advise tho it extends to a high severyty.'

'Your letter,' replies her brother, 'was sharpe as a Dagger whetted for execution. . . . when my neighbour's house is on fire, I should thank him kindly that would tell me of it. Friendly cautions March 14, 1686

are Tokens of Love, whereas Silence in Danger is a Signe of Indifference. . . . I thank you heartily for your promise to retrench your housekeeping, but cannot possibly be fully satisfied till you have made mee another to leave off play.'

March 17, 1686

'The wholl Indeavour of my life sinc my husband died,' she writes again, 'has bin to make my children's lifs comfortable, though things has not sockseeded to my mind, & am sure now sinc this unspeakable troble of yr ill opinyon of mee, I have hyd it all from them tho I have lived in sorrow night and day, & had not the Implyment of my remove divarted mee I sopos I had bin as ill as my enymis wish mee.'

March 24, 1686

Cary cannot bear being called a gamester. 'I have known & so have you, very good women in yr Acount, as playd at cards more in a yeare than I doe in seven, wch would have taken it ill to have that title given them.' Dr. Denton has been harping on the same string. 'Your sister Gardiner is both Rotterdam & Amsterdam,' he complains, 'for she doth nothing but scold at me, & swears I am ten times worse than your worship & then I must needs be a very pure youth!' 'Sartainly,' Cary goes on, 'I am not so void of reson at this age bot that I can refran from duing myself and family any damag by play beyound A sum of £20 or £30 wch cannot ruing them.'

'Restraint from Evill,' her Counsellor replies, 'is neither imprisonment nor confinement, as you call it, for to govern ourselves well is the truest

Liberty. . . . if you doe not meane £20 or £30 a year, or £20 or £30 at a time, but only £20 or £30 in all & to leave off play for Altogether whenever that is lost, in such a case your solemn and faithful promise of it, shall end this dispute with your affᵃᵗᵉ brother and servant.'

Cary however finds it inconvenient to be bound by such definite promises to so precise a person. She carries the war into the enemy's country. 'Some barbarous people has raised so great a scandall on me, I pray God forgive them . . . tis just as the lady at court [Penelope Osborne] reports, that nether I nor my daughters are ever at homb, nay, had the confidenc to tell us so to our faces, when shee has mist us when we ware at Church. I dare say no young women in towne, stay more at homb, nor work harder, nor take less pleasure a broad than thay due . . . shee ever was unhappy to me,. . . . I hope brother for the futur you will not credit the reports ill people rase of mee.' Mar. 31, 1686

Sir Ralph dockets this, 'Sister Gardiner's letter wherin she does not answer my last;' she defines her pledge in a manner worthy of a Stuart King. 'You say I speak against myselfe in saying God is pleasd to accept of a promis without being absolut, I did say it and think it, wch if hee did not, I feare most men and women liveing would be found perjured persons. . . . I beg of you that ther may never any unkind word pass between you and mee on this account, bot that our severall opinions and April 13, 1686

disputs may only be arguments & leve no unkindness.'

Sir Ralph responds at once to this appeal, he feels that Right and Reason (with big Rs) are on his side, but Love is weary of the discussion, and he sends Cary the 100*l.* she asks for. Amicable relations being thus re-established between them, she continues her chatty chronicle and her unpleasant prescriptions. 'My lady Seymore told me the old Duck of Somerset w^{ch} was her lords brother was very Inclinable to an apooplex above twenty years before he dyed, and did often Indanger his life, and after takeing many things of severall Physitians, was advised by a frend as had helped many of that complant, to ware oyld cloth at the bottoms of ther feet between ther socks and ther feet it might be next ther skin: and after my Lord wore this, hee never had any aparplexsicall fit: so I have sent you down some in case you ware it, tis held A drawing much from the head w^{ch} is imputed to prevent thes fits.'

Cary herself complains of shortness of breath but is very energetic: 'I now rise at five A clok & after our six A clok prayers, I walk in our quodrangle or in the Covent Garden wher ther is a freshnes of Ayre, purer than in St. James' Park, besids I have A house as is very open backwards wch is comfortable to me. . . .' The house is in 'James Street wch we give £60 a year for, redy furnished . . . tis neer the Church wch is the chef advantag of it.' Evelyn

describes this 'new church at S^t^ Jame's,' with its 'garlands about the walls by M^r^ Gibbons in wood,' and its richly adorned altar. Sir Ralph's contribution to Cary's furnishing is a rack for plates; 'My Cook-maid taks great delight in it, and so thay due all and therfore you have many thanks for it from them all and mine dobly for such a convenyent pece of houshold stof, for such neet things pleases me exstremely.' Cary writes after a visit to her brother, 'I have had a world of company with mee daly, bot not my lady Ann Grimston for M^rs^ Grimston was not marayed on monday morning but at night being A mode Amonxt the great ons and yesterday thay all dined at my Lord notingams. And for the honnor of y^u^ wellcome, I am told by all as sees mee, that I look better sinc I was with you, then I have don a great while so I conclud I should a groun fat, had I not had great troble to A lay the delight I took in being with you at sweet Claydon bot my joys has allways had great A lays w^ch^ is very just I should have;' after the economies of the little house in St. James', to dine well was to Lady Gardiner a pleasure second only to winning at cards. John feels much for her. 'I am sorry to see that Lady that hath kept soe many Coach horses at once, and 20 servants, now live without a paire of the first, and onely a girle of the other, for she takes no servant but frank Rogers' on a journey to Baddow. Dec. 16, 1687

Her son Jack, who has 'a gentile fancy' in dress, and in his disinclination to work, has just won

'above £1800 at play;' his family rejoices, for he is said to be 'very fair as a Gamester.' To the end of his life, Cary is appealing to Sir Ralph to get her out of scrapes, and in 1690 there are lawyer's letters which he has labelled as referring to 'My Lady Gardiner's Project with Mr Primrose in the Royall Oake Lottery, wherein she plunged Mr Page, her son-in-law, & herself, and he cheated her of £600.'

CHAPTER VIII.

SAINT NICHOLAS' CLERKS.

1655–1685.

'I think yonder come prancing down the hills from Kingston, a couple of St. Nicholas' Clerks.'

It is said that the romance of the road was buried with Claude Du Val in 1670; when having been 'hanged a convenient time,' he was conveyed to his grave by persons of quality, with a fashionable train of the weeping fair, and laid under a white marble stone curiously engraved with the Du Val arms, in the middle aisle of St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden.

The Verney letters offer little enough of romance in the life of a gentleman turned highwayman; and such a hero was likely to spend more of his days in dunning his friends from a stifling cell in Newgate, than in galloping over breezy commons, or lying in wait for dowagers' coaches in tortuous lanes. There were doubtless brave spirits among them, who, in a simpler age, might have 'stopped the mouths of lions,' or, in our own, would have found vent for their energies in African deserts, or in Arctic snows; but like Dick Hals, weary of risking

their lives in being defeated by the Dutch, and sick of waiting for arrears of pay, they threw themselves into reckless and desperate courses, making war against a society which had refused to receive them as allies.

Even the sensible and prosaic John Verney felt his blood stirred by tales of their valour and resource. 'A couple of highwaymen,' he writes in 1679, 'having robbed a countryman & leaving him his horse, he pursued 'em with hue & cry which overtook them, but they being very stout fought their way through Islington & all the road along to this town's end, where after both their swords were broke in their hands & they unhorsed, they were seized & carried to Newgate. *T'is great pity such men should be hanged.*'

The Verneys were not behind other persons of quality in owning relatives amongst these gentlemen of the road; and the correct and austere Sir Ralph did his best to get his highwaymen cousins out of scrapes. He gave them money; lent even his wig, on occasion, to assist in a disguise and an escape, and used all his political and social influence to procure reprieves and pardons. Lady Hobart, living among the Judges, in the high places of law and order, threw her sympathies into the same scale, helping with all her might to baffle justice, and to promote disorder.

Whatever might be the varying opinions about the highwayman's career—his death, if he were

sentenced by the law, never failed to evoke a burst of compassion. A rowdy gathering of good fellows accompanied him to the foot of the gallows, and laughed at the devil-may-care courage with which he met his doom; kind women, like Frances Hobart, shed hot tears of wrath and pity over his execution, while they prayed Heaven to have mercy upon his soul.

On less tragic occasions, those who had not themselves been robbed or frightened, insisted upon treating the adventures of their friends as a good joke; and a man like Colonel Henry Verney when charged, half in jest, with an attack made on his old uncle's coach, was in no hurry to clear himself of an accusation, conveying such a distinct compliment to his pluck and horsemanship.

On the other hand men applauded just as heartily, when a traveller of unwonted courage made a stout resistance to the gentleman who meant to rob him; in short, the risks of the road gave rise to a number of capital stories which had this spice about them, that the man who in his armchair laughed at the highwayman's audacity and the traveller's alarms, did so with the strong probability of having to experience both, the next time that his occasions called him abroad.

[1] 'Richard Dawson, whose family intermarried with the descendants of Mary Verney and Robert

[1] From the family MSS. of the Rev. C. F. S. Warren's by his kind permission.

Lloyd, is remembered for the courage with which he and his servant Christopher Fogwen fought the highwaymen that infested Kennington Common and the neighbourhood; he had many fearful struggles, but was always victorious. Mr. Dawson and Kit were famous characters in their day. They would sometimes drive out disguised as harmless old ladies, in bonnets and veils, and, when attacked, would rush out at opposite doors, take their assailants in the rear, handcuff them, put them into the coach, and drive off in triumph with their captives.'

Mr. Dawson was worth robbing, being as wealthy as he was capable and determined. He was at the head of the Vauxhall glass-works, established under the patronage of the Duke of Buckingham in 1670. A number of Venetian workmen, sworn to secrecy, were employed in glass-blowing, and the making of mirrors, by processes unknown in England; the profits were immense, until a disagreement between masters and men brought the enterprise to an end; perhaps because the Dawsons relied too much, in struggling with their workmen, upon the sharp and short methods so effectual in defending their purses from more direct modes of attack.

In 1657 Dr. Denton's coach was stopped on the highway; Dr. Thomas Hyde sends the news to Mun, 'I did light on your Uncle Dr. at dinner yesterday was sennight, at Whitfield: St. Nicolas Clarks' had met with him some dayes before, & rob'd him and his Lady.'

The whole family cracked their jokes upon the Doctor; Lady Hobart hears that 'he has recruted his self of Hary and others at play; let him tack heed he be not met with agan.' 'As for the Doctor,' writes Sir Roger Burgoyne, 'I shall pass him by; but as for Mistress Denton and her daughter I am very sensible of their misfortune, and more troubled for the affright they were I presume put to, then for their loss though very considerable: My very humble service to them and tell them from me, that if they will but undertake a journey to Wroxall, I will secure them from such kinds of vermin, and return them laden with thanks into the bargain.'

'When you see the doctor let him knew, I goo nowhar but I met with his news,' writes Lady Hobart, 'and never any man was so lafed at, for ever body macks mearth at it: tis said he knos the thefs, and my ant Varney vows Hary Varney one, and mayd por Pen mad; let him knou what a repitason he has with hur. But if doctor dos intend to dou anything with the country he shold have conseled the men though he knew them, for they will surely hang them.' Good Nat is sarcastic. 'You doe well to make yourself merrie with the storie which goes of my cosain Hary Verney; it seemes he is pleased with it too, but I am persuaded he would have liked the money better then the jest.'

Frank Drake is coming to pay Sir Ralph a visit, and the family joke is too good to be dropped. 'We

shall take it as a favour if you please to account us so farr strangers uppon the Way, as to send a Guide about nine aclock to the George in Alsbury, to direct us the best way for the coach by my cosen Winwood's gronds, or any other cleane way to Claydon, and my wife particularly intreats you if my cosen Harry Verney be at home that you will shutt him up, for fear he meet with us as the Dr. was mett with, for whose Lightnes I am very sorry.'

'Harry is heere,' Sir Ralph replies, 'and I will shutt him upp for once, but for future Clapps, looke to yourselves for hee is a dangerous fellow, and wherever hee thinks any money may bee had, you know a protection will not be within my power.'

Each neighbourhood had doubtless its own legends of highway robberies; Bucks certainly abounded in them, and Fuller has preserved for us a proverb of the county, 'Here if you beat a bush, it's odds youl'd start a Thief.' An amusing adventure in Buckinghamshire lanes befell Sir George Wheler. He was courting a beautiful young heiress, Hester Harman, who eventually refused him, and bestowed her charms upon Alexander Denton with infinitely tragic results. When Sir George recalled in later years how he had been saved from the thieves who sought for him, he never omitted to thank Heaven with still more fervour, that he had on the same occasion failed to gain the wife whom he had sought.

This was however a later development; at the time of his ride through Bucks,[1] 'in the summer of '72 or '73,' he carried about his person a jewel of great price to be given to the fair Hester; as well as a gold watch, 20 golden guineas and some silver; he had providently bargained, that if he himself were to be rejected, the jewel might be returned; in either event it was important that he should not be relieved of it by the way.

Sir George Wheler had spent some days with his tutor at Lincoln College, Oxford; and was sensible, he says, 'of the risque I were Like to Run in my Return to London, by reasone of the Jewell and Watch and money I had with me, which was knowne by some friends at London at Least, besides Mr. Pargiter (the jeweller) who was called a Jew.'

'To conceal the Time of my Return I knew was scarce possible among so much acquaintance; all that I could was to conceal the way I designed to Returne which I did, ffor I went downe the town as to goe by Beconsfield Road but as soon as I was out of East Gate turned Nor'wards, and went to Sr. Ralfe Varney his house in Buckinghamshire, where I was kindly entertained all night. Sir Ralfe Varney was a worthy and ingenious Gentleman, I came to be acquainted with him at my Uncle Dentons, where I frequently met him.

'The next day Sr. Ralfe obliged me to stay and Dine with him, and Staying after Diner too long, night

[1] The *Genealogist*, vol. iii. pp. 45, 46.

overtook me before I could reach Alsbury. Within a mile or two of this town I came into a deep and narrow Lane, covered over with the trees in the hedges, so close that I could see neither way before me, nor skie above me, nor anything about me. Having Pistols before me, I drew one and held it in my hand, So that I could Span it in a moment for ffear of a surprise. I was not, I suppose, above half way down this Lane but on a suddain two or three men cald out Stand! Stand!! Stand!!! ffearing them to be Robbers I Blustered also &c., til we came to a Parly, and I demanding what they would have, they told me they were the watch sent to Stop all Passengers, ffor that there had been Robberies committed that Day upon Uxbridge Common; That every body had been Robbed that past that way from nine or ten in the morning til one or two in the afternoon, which was the time I should have bene there from Beconsfield had I gone that Road. So I desired these men to conduct me to the towne and shew me the best Inne, and I would Reward them.'

Similar adventures are constantly referred to in John's letters :—

April 13, 1686

'Last night about 6 miles from London the Dutch mail was robb'd by 2 men, who gott a purchase of £10,000 in gold and Jewells, the letters are allmost all lost. There was one Passenger rode with the Post Boy, and a Trooper was so kind as to accompany them, but not to defend them. Sir Robt. Knightly and his son in the day time last weeke was robb'd

just by his country house, by 3 highway men, who commanded them out of his Coach: and tooke neither Rings nor Swords but money, they were very well mounted. One of his servants, a woman, lookt on all the while and thought they had been of Sir Robert's friends. They calld him by his name, his and his son's loss was about £5.'

When we turn from highwaymen in general to the special worthies belonging to the Verney family, we find two cousins, Hals and Turville, who earned the crowning distinction of the gallows; they were both connected with that strong woman 'ould Lady Verney,' mother of the Standard-bearer. Her daughter, by her first marriage with Geoffrey Turville, married Sir John Leake; Richard Hals was Lady Leake's grandson, and nephew therefore to Anne Hobart and Dorothy Leake.

Unless Lady Verney had a son, not mentioned in the letters, Fred Turville was styled 'cousin' at Claydon simply as a member of her first husband's family. Sir Ralph writes for him to his trustee 'John Ashburnham to the care of Capt. John Walter- Aug. 23, 1658
house governor of Garnsea Castle,' about some money Turville wants to spend 'to put him into a capacity to live. I heare hee hath been represented unto you under a very ill carracter, & soe hee was to me, which made mee the more narrowly observe him, & truly I must needes doe him soe much right as to assure you, that since I knew him, I could never justly Tax him with any manner of crime or

vice, and yet hee hath spent some part of his Time in my owne house, and my Cozen Nat Hobart's, & with other of my neare friends, where hee hath gayned much Love and affection, & had hee misbehaved himselfe, I must have heard it.' He did not justify Sir Ralph's good opinion of him; just after the Restoration, Sir Ralph is concerned to hear

July 23, 1660

'how matters went with Fred Turville at his triall, for really I should be very much troubled if hee should suffer, but his own groundlesse confidence made him too carelesse, & may cost him deare.'

He escapes on that occasion, but we are startled a few years later by learning his fate, amongst other sensational items of family news sent by Edmund from East Claydon to John at Aleppo; 'Cosen Jack Temple, Sir R's Brother, was tryed for having fourteen wives at once, and escaped the gallows. I think I have sufficiently spoken of marriages. Now for hanging, which also goes by destiny according to the opinion of some. My cosen, Fredd Turville was hanged at Hertford for burglary, and other crimes. But I'll speak no more of such ignominious ends, though these ensuing may be as deplorable; for my cosen Thom: Danby was basely murdered in a tavern in London by one Burrage; Cosen Reade killed in France; Cosen A. Temple, lieutenant in a ship of war was slayne before Algiers,' etc., etc.

Frances Hobart, who had a special place in her heart for the black sheep of the family, refers to the catastrophe in a very different tone. 'These for Sir

Ralph Verney at Middle Claydon, present.' 'I receved a letter from my poor coussin Frederick Turville the day before he was executed, where he made a request to me to send you this inclossed which he did ernestly desire might be conveyed safe to your hands. I know you have had soe much kindness for hime that I fear his death has given you some troble, for though he was guilty of many crimes in his Life, yet he died as we are informed a very good christion, with a most undanted corage showd nothing of conserne at all, but told all thouse persons that where with hime at the place, which where divers gentlemen of great quallity, that he did not fear to die, but the manner of his death trobled hime; he aded that he would not troble them with a formal speech only desired there prayers, and after he hade read some prayers which he hade in wrighting he weept, and made noe confestion there, he told them he hade don that to God, he died a chatholick, he had a priest with him a weeke, who wrought a great reformation in him. Noe gentleman was ever more lamented both by his friends and strangers, only by thouse barborous uncles that did make it apeere by there jingling proceedings that they designed his death all along, which I beleve will light hevie upon them; and Walker with his servants declar it was their will he should die; and for his sister it ware to tedious to tell how unnaturall she had bine. He expressed some troble that in all the time of his affliction she never once came or sent to him; it is too late to Aug. 25 1666

wish, but sertainly had you bine in town I doe verily beleve he had never come to this, but there was an ill fate hung over him, for there was many designes for an escape, but he neglected them. . . . They did not take any care at all for his buriale, but that woman that was continually with him till his death did bury him in the church yard. I know not what she is, but never any woman had a greater kindness for any man than she, and has spent all she has, and sold all to her skin for him. Sir I have dwelt too long upon this unpleasing subject which I biceech you pardon.'

Lady Hobart adds her testimony to his merits:

Aug. 15, 1666 'Sir Wilam Glaskock was with him to confes, but he wold not, he sayd he had lived ill but he wold not dy lick a knaf nor ruen a family, but he sayd he shold see he cold dy as unconsarned as he was then, his unkell Will at last wold have saved him, but he pretended he cold not, but wold have had his sister gon to have beged his lif but she wold not, she sayd let him be hang, I sent him an slugell but I hear he had not a cofen nor a frind to bery him, the contry cry out of his onkells, he did expres kindnes to you and to us and my Ant Vearny.'

Of Dick Hals we know much more, as he lived on terms of intimacy with his Claydon cousins, specially with Edmund Verney, who was about his own age. His father, Captain William Hals, made his will in 1637. Having returned but two years before from a West Indian voyage of great danger and suffer-

ing[1] he was 'bound forth' once more on his perilous way.

He took with him a good part of his personal estate 'as an adventure, in hope to improve the same, having divers debts due to him in the Ilands of the West Indies.' He bequeathed his 'plowland of Ballymore' and his lease of 'the two plowlands of Juthimbathy,' both in the county of Cork, 'and the stock of some reasonable value thereon,' to his 'deare and well-beloved wife Bridgett, and that young and tender child whom it hath pleased God but lately to bestow upon me.' When we next hear of them, the sea-captain is dead, the 'well-beloved' Bridgett has married again, and the boy is in England for education, where Doll Leake, his guardian, lavishes upon him what little cash she receives as Lady Gawdy's gentlewoman, and all a maiden aunt's wealth of devotion. He ingeniously defeats her efforts to make him work in any profession, but in his 19th year, she writes triumphantly to Sir Ralph, 'My nefew has put on his gowne. I thought it had bin only discours and not a reall intension.' Nov. 1655

He replies, 'Tis true your Nephew hath at last put on his gowne, but I beleeve 'twill come off againe much easier, and in farre lesse Time than twas coming on, possibly hee may not in seaven or eight Termes lay it quite aside, if hee follow it soe closely and soe long as to make any considerable benefit of it, I am much mistaken in the Humour of the man, Dec. 3, 1655

[1] See vol. i. p. 201.

it now may serve him for some shelter, but whenever that reason ceaseth, you shall see him quit it by degrees uppon pretence that either it impaires his health or some such thing, and soe fall to his old Trade again, for I verily beeleeve that course of Life as naturall, and as Gainsfull unto him, as Building is pleasant and expensive unto me.' Sir Ralph was not mistaken.

July 2, 1656 Doll writes to him six months later: 'My sister Hobart sends me word you will lay out ten pounds for Dick if he can get a plas, I give you humble thanks for it, I shall not fail to pay it . . . the pore boy has been willing to save his Mother's credett, tho' he has left himselfe in the lurch, and to the Charity of his frinds hear, He lost his time extremely while he was with his mother, and spent his twenty pound a year. The Master that I sent him to, gave a very good Carractur of him, and sence you are plesed to take notis of him, I pray obledg me so much, if you know of any lawer or aturney that wants such a servant, that you will asist him in the procuring of it. Reallie he was a very good conditioned youth, and can write 2 or 3 good hands.'

July 30, 1656 'I find by my sister you have layed out some monies for Dick,' she writes again to Sir Ralph; 'I shall not fail to see it payed, as sone as I receve it. I am sorry we should give you such a trouble, but it is the fate of nedy peopel to opres ther frinds . . . it trobles me very much that Dick can get no preferment, I cannot endure to think he should goe back

to his mother (in Ireland), whear he has lost so much time allredy, I had rather he wear a souldier, which is the worst of all professions. I have filled the paper therefore should think of a conclusion, but I fancy myself with you all this time and that is so great a plesur that I forget it is but a fancy.'

In the spring of '63 Aunt Doll comes once more to the rescue. 'You see the condision of pore Dick Hals,' she writes to Sir Ralph, 'if I healp him not his life may be lost upon that accunt, which wold give me a very great troble, I fear the parting with this money may discontent my sister Hobart . . . but the monney I will have sent . . . in a way that it may pay no det but sew out his pardon.' Feb. 3, 1663

A letter to Edmund Verney, signed Gower, is docketed as being from Dick Hals, and the date apparently as well as the name is false.

The shiftless boy, who was idling about the Law Courts in 1656, has taken a long step in his downward career by the time this was written.

'Sir, Since it was my unhappinesse to returne into England soe much contrary to your advise, I was unfortunately betrayed to the Master Keeper of Newgate and sold for £100 by a tretcherous frind in February last, where I have ever since remained in Irons. I cannot expresse with what joy I should kisse your Hand should you vouchsafe to visit mee, which if you should please to thinke mee worthy soe greate a happinesse, you might not bee seene to come to the prison, but to the Fountayne Taverne by

St. Sepulchre's Church, and send one of the drawers to the Keepers, and they will bring mee to you. Sir herein you would make mee infinite happy. I knowe not howe it may goe with mee, but my Life is in much danger, but till I see you I shall be silent. . . . You may send for mee by the name of Captain Granger, for by that name I am known in prison. I lye on the Master's Side in Newgate.'

May 25, 1666

In 1666, Richard Hals has found an outlet for his energies more worthy of his father's son; he thanks Mun Verney for innumerable kindnesses, and tells him that he is 'once more in a fayre way, eyther to intreate or force fortune to bee my frinde, I meane I am gott on board the Revenge. I have waighted both on the Duke and Prince. The Duke hath promised me that the next councell of warr shalbe for my good. I hope hee wil be his words' master. Our Flage men doe really beleve that the Dutch will ingage in the beginninge of June. Pray God send itt prove true. . . . We shall have but 80 sayle this summer to fight the Dutch, the rest are designed for the western station to keepe the French Privaters in awe. . . . We shall sett sayle for the Downes within six dayes.'

June 15, 1666

In June he gives Edmund an account of their sea-fight with the Dutch, which had lasted from a Friday to the following Monday night. 'It was oure fortune att first to be out of the fight, our ship beinge one of Prince Rupert's squadron and bound to the Westward; on Sunday afternoone we came in

and did the best we could to se the ende of itt. The Dutch had notice of our fleetes dividing, by two dogger boats they keept on the outside of the Goodwin Sands, our fleete then riding in the Downes, there could be noe hiding our intentions from them. The Duke was not above 46 sayle when wee began, the Dutch were 90 besides 16 fresh shipps that on Sunday came out of Flushinge. When we joyned with the Duke he had lost some shipps, the Prince Royall, the Swiftsure, the Essex, the Bull, the Ouverture (?) the Eagle, the Loyall George; besides many others that were soe farre disabled in their masts and rigginge, that they were forced to leave the fight soe that when the Prince joyned with the Duke, wee could not make above fiftie sayle, most of them not fitt to ingage . . . yett did wee continue to doe our duties to the uttermost of our abillities.'

'The Dutch lost near twenty sayle sunke or burnt, out of which shipps they landed not above 100 men, and for ought I could see they were as willinge to leave fightinge as ourselves which was enough. The gasett will informe you what commands we have lost, whereof I must needs lament one, Sir Exgster Mynns, hee dies so much like a man, that he lyes more the subject of envy then pitty. Lord Admirall Harman lyves too as much honoured as the other died.'

The copy of Edmund's reply from East Claydon, written on the back of this letter, vividly reflects the grief and indignation of Englishmen at the unwonted

July 23, 1666

news of naval defeat; he had begun 'Worthy,' but the adjective hardly seemed suitable, 'Dear Cousin, I have received divers letters which answer my request to you concerning maritime Accounts for which I thank you. . . . Our huge losse both of men and shipps of such worth, greeves me exceedingly, . . and I hope there will no more such vast jeofayles[1] bee perpetrated where by whole Nations may be put into great jeopardy, and that our wooden Bulwarks and Forts (than which we have no other) may no more be basely and cowardly yeelded up to our Ennemies, but that some course will be taken to preserve our ancient Policie, which was (if I am not mistaken) that all Commanders and souldiers whatsoever of or in any of the King's ships were to perish in and with them, rather than to let them come into Ennemies hands; all which was worthily performed by Our fore-Fathers. But what foolish transportation (I wonder) causeth me thus to put away any little part of my mind in writing, touching such matters, seing they are none of my businesse (though as an Englishman I may be concerned therein); and seing we have such wise, intelligent and honest Rulers and governeurs who understand (I suppose) very well what they have and ought to doe; yet if thou wert Here, (where thou shalt be very welcome to me) I would peradventure with more confidence utter my Tittle Tattle before Thee. But if thy Destiny and (I

[1] From *jeu failli*, as jeopardy is *jèu parti*, originally terms at cards.

hope) good luck throw Thee againe into the sea, then I wish thee most particularly, (though unto all my brave countrymen) happy successe and victory, for the obtayning whereof I make no doubt but wee shall doe, if wee all seeke God as wee ought before the next fight,

So farewell, remaining

Your truly loving kinsman and servant

EDMUND VERNEY.'

Dick Hals sends Edmund his journal written on board the 'Loyall Colchester,' from July 19 to August 14, 1666. 'I have adventured to send your worship a breife account of my last viage and ingagement, in the most seamanlike tearmes my small travell in that art would furnish me with'—it is chiefly a log of wind and weather.

He has reached London in November, and acknowledges Edmund's letter of Nov. 21, 'in which you generously condole the losses of our navy by sea, I hope we shall regaine our lost flags and honours next springe. . . . I am tryeing to gett an imploy. Pray God send me good lucke. I have lardge promisses but noe sure ground as yett. I want frends to stirr a little for me. I have greater reason now to expect itt then before, since I have sealed my alleagance with some part of my bloud, though noething of danger. I pray God the Duke give me not cause to wish itt had bene more fatall, since all wayes of liveing but what I place in his noblenesse, are taken from me.

Dec. 17, 1666

Edmund replies, 'I wish I were able to helpe you to an employment according to your good deserts, but in fayth I am but a poore Country Gentleman without any interest at all in reference to those matters, but . . . if you please to come and keep Christmas with me here you shall be very very welcome.'

Dec. 22, 1666

'I find the maine stopp of both my biussnesses,' Dick Hals writes to Sir Ralph, 'to be want of money to the clarkes att the Navy Office, and to my Lord Generall's Secretary. I have tryed all meanes and wayes to gett in my owne wages which amounts to neare £16, but I find I cannot doe itt till after Christmasse.' He asks the loan of 3*l.* till his pay comes in, which Sir Ralph sends him. 'Remember I was borne,' he says, 'a trouble to my friends.'

Without pay or employment poor Dick could not long keep out of mischief on shore, and there is an urgent note from Lady Hobart to Sir Ralph, 'As you love me let me have one of your whitist wigs and you shall have a new one for it. It 'tis to help away a frind. You shall know all hereafter. Fail not to send it, and let it be that that is lest curled. Fear not for hansomnes. Pray send this by the gearll, but tell hur I must mack you one. If you have an old one, let us have it too, you shall have the best can be for it.'

In February '67 Richard Hals is choosing some armour for his cousin in London; he has tested it 'with as much powder as will cover the bullet in the palme of your hand;' Mun wants to test it again,

which the armourer objects to, as 'it is not the custome of workmen to try their armor after it is faced and filled. . . . As for tasles noe horseman in England weares them and as for a quilted gorgett,' but here a mouse intervening the postscript alone remains. 'I have seene all the best armors in the gards, but can see none such as yours are, my Lord Gerard's excepted.' Lord Gerard commanded the eighty gentlemen of the King's Life Guards. Charles had knighted the Commissioners sent by the city to greet him on arrival, with Lord Gerard's sword. Edmund's armour sent down by Plaisto, the carrier, was valued at 14*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.*, the box and cord at 2*s.* 6*d.*

'The Armour fits well enough, only the man did cut away to much just under the Arme pit both of back and breast; but for the head-piece, it is something heavy, yet I think it well enough if it did not come downe so low upon my forhead, as to cover all my eyes and offend my Nose, when I put my head backwards to look upwards.'

Dick congratulates Edmund on the birth of his eldest son, 'God make him a better man than his father; that's blessing enough.'

In 1669 'divers Highwaymen are taken and had not Dick Hals leaped out of a window 2 storeys high leaving his horse and his cloathes behind he had been taken. Warrants are out for him and many more, the King will pardon none but such as come in and discover and convict their fellows.' Dec. 23, 1669

In '70 'Cousin Dick says he is married to a sailor's

Feb. 18, 1671

wife at Wapping.' In '71 he writes to Sir Ralph and Edmund from Exeter gaol, 'I, the most unfortunate amoungest men, am now forced to act a strange part in this westerne stage of our English world, imprisoned for noe offence. . . . Whether I live or die, is not much matter, itt not beinge the part of a man to testifie too much fearefulnesse of that which of necessitie will come one time or other, besides I doe not beleve itt ever lay in my power to prevent the stroke of my destenie. I have written to my cossen, your brave sonn, for a whindinge sheete, that in itt I may with my boddy winde in the eternall remembrance of his aboundinge spiritt.'

Feb. 19, 1671

'Your pardon I beg,' he writes to Edmund, 'as beinge the person to whom I am most obliedged of mankind, nor may you justly deny itt, iff you consider you give itt not now to the liveinge but to the dyeinge admirer of your person. Thet over-rulling hand of fate nic't me in the bud, when I least thought of harme, and in a place where I never did any, soe that lyeinge in gayle onely for want of bayle for the peace, I am like to be made knowne for what in truth I have bene. . . . I am att present in St. Thomas' ward Exon, and, Sir, would bee much att peace could I see three lines under your hand. My Aunt Hobart will send itt to mee. My thoughts are unsettled, and sometimes unwillinge to leave this world, but when I think of my misserable life past, I againe recover, and possest with thoughtes becominge a soldier I passe by all concerns.'

Dick Hals might abuse himself but he allowed no one else to do so. He writes indignantly 'to Mrs. Hannah Baker, in Chancery Lane at Sir Nathaniel Hobart's,' 'Because I am att present sunck by the hand of the most powerful God, you amoungest the rest make me your scorne.'

Next comes a melancholy letter to Edmund from Newgate, 'I have made a hard shift to hould out three or fower yearres in a bad kinde of life, I meane, the highway, for which I am att last condemned to die, justly as to the law, though by the unjustnesse of a falce frende, who fainte-harted, swore against fower of us, to save his owne life. But, Sir, his Majestie, out of his infinite mercy, hath bene pleased to save our forfeited lives by his royall repreëve. My Aunt Hobart was the maine instrument, under God, who proved herselfe a mother and an aunt both in this affayre. That verry day I was taken in my bed by 4 in the morninge. They then robbed mee of every pennysworth of my ill-gotten goodes, and enclosed mee in a dungion, where I was keept without candle, fire, pen, inke or paper or frende, till they brought me before the Judges. Neyther could they then have done me any hurt, had not Judge Morton, by his insinuatinge facultie, over perswaded one William Ward to confesse, and to appeach Andrew Palmer, John Britton, James Slaughter and myselfe, which he impudently did, and, by his evidence alone, was we convicted. I have not wherewithall to subsist but what I have from the

April 30, 1672

charitie of my frendes, for truly, Sir, they left me not worth one farthinge, when I was taken. God deliver me out of there handes and send me on board some shipp in the fleete, fireshipp or other.' Mun agrees that it would be better 'de hazarder sa vie plus honorablement, que de la perdre sur un gibbet pour meschancetez.'

May 2, 1672

A few days later Hals appeals to Sir Ralph. 'The Kinge goes out of towne to see the French Fleete, as wee heard this verry day, soe that we shalbe left in danger of Judge Morton's ffury, which is implackable, especially to me, for goeinge by his name, as hee is informed. Now if I could possibly make the Recorder my frende, he is able to ballance Judge Morton, and overway him on the Bench, which is not to bee done but by his clarke, Mr. Rumsey. It appeares that my Aunt Hobart did promise him a gratuitie, for the non-performance of which, hee did, in plaine termes, threaten my life in the gayle by insencinge his unckle, the Recorder against mee, and itt's verry probable may doe me some greate injury, if not prevented in tyme by sattisfation. The other three that were condemned with mee gave him £5 each man, and soe would I but that I cannot as yett gett in money which I have in hands abroade. They tell us heare in Newgate that we may be endited uppon other Enditements next Sessiones, which, if soe, our lives will againe lye on the Recorder's good report to the Kinge. I beseech you, honnoured Sir, aske advice on this poynte and let Mr. Fall resoulve

me, and out of your aboundant charitie be pleased to assiste the most unfortunate of your honner's captivated kinsmen.'

He writes again, 'The Kinge crost us out of the generall pardon and to what intent I know not; some say to goe to Tangere, but I beleve to be hanged, which I am sure stands with most reason. They intend to endight us againe as I heare, which if they do I am resolved to pleade guilty to all, if there comes a thousand pardons still keepe me to the Kinge's mercy, except you send me other advice.' He encloses a letter to Sir Richard Temple, which he begs Sir Ralph 'to second and so help to save his life.' May 16, 1672

Two months later he thanks Edmund for his great kindness, and wishes him 'a merry buck season.' 'Were I in any other gaole then Newgate, I would venter a tryall of skill to see you, but this place is made past all hope.' . . . 'Tomorrow beinge Wednesday, I and the rest of my fraternitie are to pleade a pardon of transportation, some say for the Tangeir Gallies, and others, more moderate, tell us for Virginia.' July 11, 1672 Sept. 14, 1672

It would have been worse than death for a naval officer, who had served with distinction in action, to be sent to the galleys; but Hals was not without old shipmates, who remembered his better days. 'Capt. Thomas Elliot my former Capt. att sea, attended the Duke of Yorke in this Citty, in order to his Knighthood for his service done in this and the former

warr; and hearinge by a friende of mine, that I have neade of his assistance, gave me a vissitt the second day of his arrivall; hath promised to begg on his knees for my releasement; will to my advantage declare my service under his command in the last Dutch warr, will engage for my future Deportment (which is much) and carry me with him to sea in this present expedition to the streights. Soe God seemes att last to bee passified.'

Probably Captain Elliott's intercession was unavailing, as Dick refers next spring to his recent 'happy escape out of prison,' and laments his ingratitude 'to soe deare a frende as Mr. Palmer,' which he can 'never sufficiently repent of.' For Doll's sake he is being nobly entertained at Croweshall, 'and indeed above the merrits of any kinsman though more happy and fortunate than myself.' . . . 'And on my yet inviolate faith I protest, I would hast to the place I am ordered to;' he sends his 'harty acknowledgments to Sir Chas. Gawdy & that incomparable lady his Mother, that if I die in this expedition my Goast may not be troubled to cross the seas to do it. . . . I am not sent away naked, but with Sword, Clothes, and Money, and to Eternize the obligation, all wth so free & generus a soule, that I some times beleve y^{t} I can bee nothinge lesse then a sonn to the one, or a brother to the other.'

Feb. 10, 1673

Sir Ralph has again given efficient help, 'for nothing can miscarry, where so much generositie leads the van,' 'And,' Dick writes to Mun, 'I am to

goe on pilgrimage to the next Campaigne in Holland there to pay those vowes I never made, to serve the French Kinge against the Dutch; but since nothing else but a bad cause can Expiate crime like mine, I submitt to my desteney and resoulve to fight for pistolls, and leave conscience att home, my religion beinge yett to chuse. I hope you will not feare my beinge Converted by the Jesuits, but be I, or be I not, I will rather turne Infidell then ever subscribe to any other bible then

Your most oblidged & most Affect: Coss:
& humble Servt Rich: Hals.'

He assures his devoted Aunt Hobart that he hopes, in the Low Countries, 'to acquire honour or a grave or both.' Having failed to get either, he finds himself next in Chelmsford gaol, ready to reveal anything or betray anybody. 'Shame keept me from writing before,' he confesses to Sir Ralph, 'but now beinge absolutely resoulved to hate for ever the company and name of a thiefe, the Clergy of Essex, who have bene dayly laboringe with me to cleare my conscience before I die, have prevayled with mee to make this discovery.' Feb. 8, 1674

The 'Clergy of Essex' were scarcely to be congratulated on their penitent who had stooped to this last baseness 'to win his salvation.'

'My Cossen Frances receaved a note from me,' he writes to Sir Ralph, 'wherein was a full discovery of all persones I did or doe knowe that use the pad, but my keeper haveinge bene att London finds Feb. 8, 1674

thinges, I judge, worse than he thought . . . my discovery was made the 21st. of the Last mounth, to Sir Edward Smyth att Woodford, and to Mr. Justice Maineard, who committed me, with Matt Roberts, Toby Burke alias Faulkner, Thomas Dwite alias White, and Harris, which Harris and Burke or Faulkner are taken and in the Gatehouse. Sir Edward Smyth may easely sattisfie himselfe by seeinge Harris, for he tooke him by the bridle first. The Kinge's proclamation acquits the first discoverer, and soe will the Judge, iff Captain Richardson doe not prevayle to the contrary. I humbly beseech you to use your interest with Judge Twisden to this effect. Serjant Bramston, Sir Mundivile Bramston and Sir John Bramston are powerfull men with my Lord Twisden.'

Feb. 26, 1674

The wretched man's confessions were not yet full enough. Sir Charles Gandy writes to him, 'This impeaching will not serve the turne, for you must sett down the particular robberys, who was with you, and their lodginges and places where they may now be found, the party's name whome you robbed, when and where it was done, and the Judges expect to knowe who harboured you before and after the robbery, or bought any of the stolen goodes, and unless this be soe fully and clearly done that the severall offendours may be taken, there will be one hope of mercy for you in this world.'

June 22, 1674

Dick Hals gave abjectly all the information asked for. 'When I came into this gaole,' he writes

from Chelmsford, 'I was resoulved to die unknowne to my frendes, but Providence orderinge itt otherwayes, to my greate advantage, for althowe I am to be banished, itt is but what I should have courted iff left to my owne dispose, being assured that England, Ireland or Scotland are not places for me to rayse my fortune in, soe that to be sent, as I am promised, by that noble gentleman, Esquire Cheeke, into Flanders, Holland, France or Spaine, is the compleate sume of my desires or ambition.' But his fate is yet uncertain; he despairs again. 'The tyme drawers neare. I am yett a lost man, sure, sure, sure.'

Hals writes again the next day, 'That I am a deade man is most certeyne. I knowe itt from too good a hand to doubt itt. I had itt from Esquire Cheeke, who loves me more than I deserve, and promised yet once more to try the Judge.' He asks for a little money. Sir John Bramston would bring it, or the post, and then 'Dick will once more try his skill.' July 7, 1674

The path of the informer is thorny. Dick feels that he has sold himself to the devil, without getting his wages. 'All the miseries which attend humanity have fallen on my head. . . . This onely must afflycte me, that I was soe weake, on promise of life, to discover others, and yett by the severitie of my new masters, the Judges, to be tyed up for my good service. Besides this, all the gentlemen and Justices of the Peace in this county of Essex have bene made July 26, 1674

staulkinge horses. The noble Sarjant and his ffamily to come severall tymes to take my examination, and to retorne itt to London, and then Judge Whindam himselfe to promise life on the tearmes aforesaid, yett all these poyntes in controversy to be throwne aside and nothinge but death thought on—this is Justice when the Devill shalbe Judge! Could they not as well have pressed me or hanged in my state of inocency, I meane, while I was a pure theife, without blott or blemish, as to make me stincke in the nostrills of my ould assosiates, and then out of love to hange me for my new service to my new masters.'

He makes one more despairing appeal to Sir Ralph from Chelmsford Gaol, on August 11. 'I am ashamed to discover my weakenesse unto you, but I must. The sight of the executioner, who is still keept in the house in expectation of my execution on Monday next, is the greatest torment to me in the world, worse then death itselfe.'

Nov. 3, 167

But Dick was to have another chance. 'I have, I thanke God and good frendes, got the weather gage of ill fortune. . . . That most worthy and generous gentleman, Capt. Collins, into whose hands I putt myselfe after my escape out of gayle, will give an account for his fidellitie eyther here or hereafter.' Sir Ralph has sent him a welcome gift of twenty shillings by his laundress.

Feb. 20, 1675

But in the spring of '75 he is back in Chelmsford gaol, and in mortal fear of the associates he had betrayed who have come from France to witness

against him. 'Iff thinges had not bene soe privatly carried,' he writes to Sir Ralph, 'I should not now have troubled all my noble kinsmen and frendes. How they will deale by me this Assisses, I know not nor can I learne of anyboddy what is done for me . . onely a she frende, wife to Carew writ me downe word (ould love will not be forgotten) that her husband, and Stanley and Palmer and the rest have layed their heades togeather to cutt me off, the way they intende to goe to worke she could not informe me, but soe soone as she knowes she will. Least I doe not live to write more unto you pray Sir . . . present my respects and service to my generous cossen Verney . . . and with my soule I wish I had taken his counsell when tyme was. . . . Iff I am not hanged, I shall goe, like Mounseir Le Gue, without a shirt. My Aunt hath promissed me an ould one a longe tyme, but her many troubles makes her forgett me.' There is a Postmark on the letter, 'Essex Post goes and coms every day.'

Two days later he writes again, 'Had not the commands of that noble gentleman, Sir Moundeford Bramston, and my faythfull promise to him made, keept me prisner, more then my gayle and chaines, I would longe since have given you all a visitt att London, but now I will abide the worst, yett itt were good, iff the Judge be morose, to send downe my last reprive, which came when I was from home takeing the ayre. Who brought itt I know not, but I was tould by the gaylour and severall others that Feb. 22, 1675

itt cam durante bene placito Regis. Iff soe, itt will still save my bacon.'

March 13, 1675

Dick Hals' next letter is to Lady Hobart. 'What will become of me I know not in this miserable place. Were I a ship board to be transported to any place, (Tangiers excepted) I would be well content. The truth is I have deserved the worst that can bee, but God will not allowe each man his desserts, least more perrish than hee is willinge to loose. Sir John Bramston wrote me word before the Assiyes that he had written to a very good frende of mine att London, I knew he meant one of his generous brothers, to insert me in the Newgate pardon. Iff soe I must be removed by Habeas Corpus to London to pleade itt. . . . Sir John Howell, the Recorder, was very briske with me, I beleve he remembred ould stories. Iff my noble Cossen Edmond knew my condition, I doe verryly beleve he would doe more for me then all my new frendes. My most Excellent wife beleves mee past further service, in England, therefore neyther comes, nor sends to mee. I am not sorry for itt, but on the other side glad, however she is indebted to mee, if ever I gett out, more then she will willingly pay mee. Iff Sir Ralph will put the Noble brothers in minde of my businesse I may gett out the next Assisses of this place, but iff neyther hee, nor they doe acte, I am sure to lye till I rot, which will not be longe, for the ould distemper is not cured. My humble service to generus Sir Ralph Verney, Madam Cornewallis, Madam Gibbon

and her sister, Sir Tory Smith and his Lady and those deare children; my deare Cossen Anne and my noble Cossen Edmond Verney when you write to Claydon, I most humbly subscribe most Honored Aunt Your for ever obleidged kinsman and servant,

'RICHARD HALS.'

A note received by Sir Ralph in Chancery Lane in November '75 is docketed from 'Dick Halse, a Highwayman—since hanged.' 'I am in greate want, this cold winter will kill me outright. The bearer sits on horsebacke while I write.'

The charity of Dick's relations was not exhausted, and he writes a gushing letter of thanks addressed to Sir Ralph 'next dore to the Black Balcony in Lincolln's-Inn Feilds in Holburne Row.' 'I wish my gratfull soule were not confined within the narrow limmitts of a foole's brest. . . . I dare say you beleve I pray for you, and wish you all prosperitie, and that I have just cause to admire and adore that providence, whose carefull eye amoungest soe many greate men, my frends, pitched upon yourselfe to preserve me.' Feb. 15, 1676

But neither God nor 'great men' could long help poor Dick against himself; a piteous line reaches Sir Ralph in June '76, written apparently from London. 'I am now arrived at the worst place in England, where sinne and vice abound to an infinite. I trust my newborne grace will defende me and ittselfe from participating this sinck of humers and disorders.'

Three years later Sir Ralph writes to John; Lady
Aug. 18, 1679 Hobart is at Claydon—'well, but somewhat weake of her leggs—she brought downe her daughter, her two Maydes & little Will—And least they should bee too few she invited Dick Hals too, & never acquainted me with it. He came downe in a cart with her Cooke mayd, but he is at your Brother's house.'

Nov. 23, 1679 After this he gets an appointment: 'Dick Hals is a Baly but dos not dou no duty,' Lady Hobart writes, 'he has tou men but he is to over se all the balys, for they have cheted hyly; he receives all the mony of the cort, and has rased it much senc he cam in, he is very hones, and I hop will kep so, my stomack is not so good as it was at cladon, I mis your good bear, I find the ale mor havey.'

Dick turns up again in unwonted surroundings. His cousin, Doll Smith, Anne Hobart's grandchild, is to be married at Radcliffe to Mr. Wythers, and these warm-hearted relations, who have stood by Dick in his darkest days, have bidden him to the wedding.

Edmund Verney, who had been looking after his hay-makers through the long July day, watched from his garden gate the smart cavalcade as it passed through East Claydon in the evening. The great Sir William Smith, with his usual taste for splendour, drove the bridegroom's family down in his coach, with eight men on horseback in attendance. Dick Hals, riding with the other wedding guests, turned into the White House, to greet his old friend as he went by. 'He sent over the next day,' Mun writes,

'by a Messenger-expresse for a Plaister for his side, from my Chirurgeon, & withall sent word that to-morrow is the wedding-day, so Pegg must dance barefoot, otherwise Thom. Smith, Mr Wythers, Mr King & Dick Hals were to have dined with me, but when people marry wives, they cannot come.' There was much merry making at the wedding, 'ten shillings were given to the Ringers at Buckingham, the fiddlers of Gawcott were sent for,' Hester Denton drove over from Hillesden in her coach; and Parson King made love to Pegg, the bride's lively little sister, in such wise, that the aunts and cousins gossiped pleasantly of another festive gathering to be held ere long. The grim highwayman must have been a tragic figure in the peaceful old grey church, and amid the village festivities, the music and dancing, the sunshine and the roses. But Dick could be a gentleman when he chose, and perchance the stories darkly hinted at, concerning this strange relation, whose long absences and sudden returns were alike unaccounted for, gave him a romantic interest in the eyes of the bride and her maidens. A few months later he is going about Buckingham with Tom Smith drinking at several houses, 'to make interest for Sir William Smith against a new Parliament,' and most successful in capturing votes instead of purses. July 3, 1682

These were the last gleams of light in a stormy day. Hals soon resumed his desperate courses; his one remaining link with better things being his

love for his child, whom he could seldom see. To
April 20, 1683 his faithful friend, Edmund Verney, he writes 'After 30 yeares service I feare I am lost, left to the wide world, but bee itt how itt will, whielst the Emperor and Turke are at variance, I will not want. All that troubles me is my little boy, but God is able to provide for him. I would if I could.'

Two years more elapse of ignoble stratagems and hairbreadth escapes. The perils of the road are notorious. In 1685 the Banbury coach is attacked 'going upp with a woman and a man riding by it for protection, 2 Horsemen met it & rob'd them all upon Grendon Common, & the Rogues are not taken.' Public feeling was exasperated, and the gentlemen of the road when caught could expect no more mercy. Judge Holt about this time, visiting an old friend in prison, whom he had just sentenced, asked after their college chums. The answer was, 'Ah my Lord they are all hanged now but myself & your Lordship.'

April 27, 1685 'I have noe great news,' writes Dick Hals to Sir Ralph, with a dash of his old cheerful courage, 'but only that I thinke to die next weeke. I can doe more then David, for I can number my dayes, haveinge, as I judge, 10 to live from the date hereof, nor doth the law take away my life, but the mallice of Goaler and overheate of a Chiefe Justice, who rubbs too hard upon my ould sores.' He is grateful to Sir Ralph and Edmund for all their past kindnesses; no one would have been so ready to serve

them 'had my starrs bene soe kinde to have called me to itt.' 'My tryall comes on the 29th of this mounth, and that day sennight, if not before, wee die. . . . We expected a proclamation or gaole delivery, but that's past hope.'

On May 4, John hears that 'at the Old Baily 23 were condemned to die amongst wch is Dick Halsey;' further efforts to save him were felt to be in vain.

Will Hals, the brave and pious sea-captain, praised God with joy for the birth of his only son, and now this son was to be hung at Tyburn. Doll Leake who had so often helped and forgiven the wayward boy, had passed beyond the reach of evil tidings; Anne Hobart had long ago spent her influence and exhausted her resources.

Sir Ralph was in the midst of his troubled election at Buckingham; 'I am sorry for Dick Hals,' he writes, 'and wish he might have been transported, I trust God will forgive him, and keep us from such sad ends.'

There is no doubt of his fate this time, for John Verney has seen him 'in the cart;' Edmund, who has always done justice to the 'few virtues' he had 'among many vices' has a last kind word to say of him—'Cozen Dick is among the number executed, I am sorry for it, I wish I could have saved him. But if he be gone, I pray God rest his soule in Heaven.'

CHAPTER IX.

SOME BUCKS ELECTIONS OF 1685.

'Long experience has found it true of the unthinking mobile, that the closer they shut their eyes, the wider they open their hands.'

SOUTH.

THE sorrow for Charles the Second's death was very genuine; a long-suffering nation seemed to feel they
Feb. 8, 1685 could have 'better spared a better man.' 'Everybody is in a great damp since they have hard the doolfall news,' writes Sir Ralph's housekeeper on the succeeding Sunday, 'Mr. Butterfield is not well, so wee had neither praiers nor sarmon today at Middle Cladon.'

Alexander Denton sends up a messenger from Hillesden in great haste to ask Sir Ralph's good
Feb. 9, 1685 counsel. 'The King's death is a great trouble to all his good subjects in the Country. . . . I believe never a better prince or man lived in the world or will be more missed than he, but beeing God Almighty was soe pleased to take him to himselfe, & rob this nation of soe great a blessing . . . . give me leave to aske whether it be my duty for to goe into mourning. . . . being in the Country, or if it be necessary for me, then whether my wife must doe the

like, & whether it must be black cloth or Crape. I would not be singular.' He finally decides that a country squire may save the cost of 'blacks' by keeping much at home, as he hears the Coronation will be shortly, 'when everybody may be out of it againe.' Lady Gawdy writes, 'The generall calamety by the lose of our good King dus deepely strike my harte & and makes my famely concerns but an attendant to the morning for him, but our new King has offered all the consolation wee could hope, by his gracious declarations; longe may hee live to be a new nursing father to the Church & his people as hee has promised.' Feb. 12, 1685

'My sonn is returned in helth to his own home, but the loss of the late King has put new sadnes all over him, which I cannot but love him all the better for. . . . he is mine both by love and nature. Your complement to him is so pleasing a deceipt to me, as I willingly receive it as you designed me, a Joy which I have no need to put a barr against.'

Sir Ralph tells her that 'great application will be made to fill up all vacant places,' and advises Sir Charles Gawdy to come to town at once, for 'there are certaine Criticall Moments when men that observe them may build their Fortunes.'

His wife, Lady Mary, is too anxious about her father's health to enter into such schemes; Lord Denbigh is in Oxford for advice, and as Sir Ralph 'lives so near & knows all the eminent doctors there, shee longs to hear how eminent one Dr.

Ratclife is.' Sir Ralph assures her 'that Dr. Ratcliffe is generally esteemed for skill & practice one of the most eminent doctors in Oxford, & most constantly employ'd by all persons of Quality both in that country & at Astrop Wells.' Other members of the family were not of Sir Ralph's opinion. John Verney writes [May 1, 1682], 'Every one that hears of Dr. Ratcliff admires that Coz. Denton would send a 2nd time to so careless a physician, for certainly if no other Dr. in Oxford could please him, he had better send to London than to be valued under a bottle of wine or the seeing of a horse run . . . Dr. Ratcliff I hear intends to set up in London after he has taken his degree at Oxford.'

His skill did not avail to prolong the earl's life beyond the summer.

Sir Charles Gawdy has a strange 'little gift' to ask of the new King, 'A country-man a mile off his house hanged himself, his personal estate was worth £150,' the King granted it him, but 'my Lord Castlehaven & severall others . . . . tho' the advantage was but small . . . . so prest & re-begged it of the King' that Sir Charles fears his first promise will not hold. Sir Ralph recommends him as 'a most accomplisht Gentleman, extreamly civil obligeing in all his expressions, & well worthy of his Majty's favour.'

John Verney was at Reading when King James was proclaimed, and the people 'made Bonfires and rang the Bells.' The satisfaction was short lived;

the town had not done gossiping about the poverty of Charles's burial and the misfit of the coffin, when it was rumoured that 'three Scotchmen were clapt up in prison for treason, for saying a papist King should not raine long,' and it became apparent that the King's actions did not bear out his first judicious words. During the next three months the country was violently excited over the elections.

Since the Parliament summoned to Oxford in March 1681 and dissolved within eight days, the faithful Commons had never met, and as the time went on, it was evident that the Court party were prepared to use violent measures to secure a compliant majority. The boroughs had been attacked in the previous reign, charters had been forfeited, and when new ones were granted 'the election of members were taken out of the hands of the inhabitants, and restrained to the corporation men' (Burnet). Buckingham had received such a charter in the previous July, the two borough members were elected by the Mayor and twelve Aldermen, a state of things which continued down to the Reform Bill of 1832.

The new Mayors and Sheriffs were all in the Government interest; the excitement was great in the country, and there was an unusual number of candidates. The Whigs by their ready belief in the calumnies of Titus Oates, and their cruel persecution of the Papists, had brought about a reaction against themselves. With a discredited and disheartened

opposition the country seemed in danger of losing some of its hardly won liberties, for want of leaders in the impending struggle. Sir Ralph in his 73rd year, with the increasing conservatism of age, and a sobering experience of civil war and anarchy, such as none of the younger generation possessed, was inclined to trust the new King, and was unwilling to stand against the Government. But the electioneering tactics employed on the King's side, roused the best instincts of the old Parliament man, and a more personal motive may have quickened his decision. It was rumoured that the young Squire of Hillesden was eager to come forward, if Sir Ralph pronounced himself too infirm to stand again. The older members of the family were aghast at the presumption of a youth whose grandfather had sat with Sir Ralph in the Long Parliament. Sir Ralph straightened his bent back, took posset for his cough, felt that he was not as old as he had imagined, and forthwith accepted the invitation from Buckingham.

Alexander Denton was in fact thirty years of age and the father of several children, but he understood the situation, anxiously cleared himself from any suspicion of disloyalty to his godfather and oldest friend, his only thought had been 'to keep out a stranger, thinking it as fit for me, as any such body,' and he now put his 'small interest' entirely at Sir Ralph's disposal.

Sir Ralph Verney therefore and his cousin of Stow, who had won the Buckingham Borough seats for the Whigs in 1681, were to contest them again.

Sir Richard Temple was not popular with his relatives at Claydon or at Hillesden—a busy schemer 'making all things secret, and keeping nothing secret'—but he was too influential a person to be overlooked; he had a following of moderate men of both parties, and protested moreover that he would rather stand with his old colleague and kinsman 'than all mankind besides.' The Tory candidates were Lord Latimer and Sir John Busby of Addington (the lawyer whom Mary Verney had seen during the troubles waxing rich when other people grew poor), now a county magistrate of some local importance. Two years before Edmund Verney had been concerned with the politics of the borough, and wrote to John about them: 'I mett Sr Richard Temple at my ffathers, and at his Request I went with Him to Buckingham to Retreive a lost Game, about choosing a new Bayly, wch Wee Didd Effect, with much adoe, The Consequence of this Businesse Hadd Been, That if the adverse Party There Had Gayned that Point of Choosing a Bayly among their owne Creatures, Sr Richard Temple Hadd never Been Chosen Member of Parliament at Buckingham more while Hee Lived in all Human probability, Lett Sr Richard ffancye to Himselfe what He will to the Contrary: & I Think I Didd Him no smale service There, for Hadd I not Been with Him at that Time I may asseure you without Vanity That Sr Richard's greatest Ennemy Robinson Hadd Been Bayly: Whereof now Mr Hillesdon Sr Richard's ffreind is Bayly. . . . May 7, 1683

'It was much discoursed of to Sr Richard's dishonnor to sneake downe in his arch Ennemy Robinson's Coach, tho' Sr Richard vindicates Himself by saying He didd it to oblige Buckingham, yet no Body There understands it, But Reckons it an incomparable meanenesse of spirit in Sr Richard to stoope on yt fashion to Robinson on purpose as is said to sweeten the Bitternesse of his Enemy, for you must Know that this Robinson is a Lace Buyer and Hath sett up a fflying Coach betweene London and Buckingham: and this insolent ffellow at a ffayre at Bristol in a dispute betweene Him and one Hartly, another Lace Buyer and Burghesse of Bucks, publickly called Sr Richard Temple Rogue & Rascall and Knave &c.'

Sir Ralph's electioneering morality was at least two centuries in advance of his time. He was 'content to entertain the Mayor and Aldermen before the election in a reasonable manner, to join Sir Richard in giving £10 or £20 a piece to the poor, to pay all charges on the day, and, after it, to treate the Mayor & Aldermen & their Wifes at a Dinner, at as high a value as Sir Richard thinks fit, by way of thanks to them for their love & kindness. But to treat the Mobile at all the Alehouses in the Parish & to make them Drunke, perhapps a Month beforehand, as is usual in too many places uppon such occasions, I shall not joyne in that Expence, I had rather sit still, than gaine a place in Parliament by soe much debauchery.' Alexander Denton was

'clearly of Sir Ralph's opinion against barrels of ale,' holding 'that a man makes himself a slave that is chosen after that manner,' but with him it was merely a pious opinion that did not interfere with his habits, whereas Sir Ralph's principles and practice were alike the despair of his supporters.

Mun, who is in town with his father, precedes him to Claydon. Sir Richard has the writ brought to him at Uxbridge; he gave a crown to the bearer and Mun gave him another, '& five guineas more to Mr. Barnewell at Aylesbury.' Sir Richard put the writ in his pocket till the moment should be propitious for delivering it. Mun entertains him at the White House, whence he writes to his father, '. . . I come newly from wishing Sir Richard good night, he lyeth in my great Parlor Chamber; the Clock hath just struck one, & I begin to be sleepy, so I will to Bedd, but first say my Prayers for your good Health & prosperous voyage.'

They meet again for the Assizes at Aylesbury, 'being the wettest & the windiest day that I have seene,' Sir Ralph writes to John. 'Tis a Mayden Assise, for none will bee hanged, but 3 or 4 small offenders are Burnt in the Hand. Your brother was of the Grand Jury, & soe was my Cozen Denton. The Sheriffe kept a noble shrevalty, Mr. Wood a Turky Marchant is heere, I think he married one of the Sheriffs Daughters. Sir Tho Tyrrill's Butler that killed a Deerstealer that was stealing Rabets in Thornton Parke is found guilty of Manslaughter.

March 10, 1685

Will Chaloner indited one that lopped the Trees about the Schole house at Steeple Claydon, but the Grand Jury would not finde the Bill.'

Nothing is talked of in the coaches, and at the inns, but the contests. The Whig candidates for the Borough of Aylesbury are quarrelling amongst themselves. Sir Ralph arriving at Amersham finds

March 13, 1685 'the Towne full of Ale & Noyse & Tobacco, being the Election day,' and late as it is, he drives on to Missenden for quiet. 'A Passenger says, Lee & Ingoldsby are like to carry it at Aylesbury,' he writes, 'noe body can yet determine it. My Cough & Cold is badd enough, God helpe me.' Sir Ralph's boastful neighbour, Cousin Smith of Radcliffe, has gone up to contest the Shire of Middlesex. John Stewkeley is his agent, and writes to Sir Ralph of the polling.

March 19 1685 'The candidates were Sir Wm. Smith, Sir Charles Gerard, Sir Hugh Middleton, Mr. Hawtry, Mr. Ranton & Mr. Johnson of Mile End. Sir W. Smith came into the field attended with about 200 men, most on horseback, but tis thought not neare halphe of them had votes. He finding his party so inconsiderable in respect of the rest, desisted, & gave all his votes to Sir Hugh Middleton but he lost it by a 150 votes at least, & Sir C. Gerard & Mr. Hawtry who joyned interest carried it. They were both of them thought to be very honest gentlemen, this is the 3rd time Sir Hugh Middleton hath stood & spent a great deal of money & missed it.'

By the end of March Mun has delivered 'the

Precept to the Mayor of Buck[m], so hee may go to Election when hee pleaseth. My father,' he writes to John, 'hath 7 of the 13 electors pretty firme to Him, so that if the Mayor doe not trick us by going to choose when some of our party are abroade upon their businesses, my father must needes carry it tho' I perceive Hee would willingly decline it. I am just going to Buckingham with my father soe I must put a period to this. Sir Richard Pigott is dead.' Lady Gardiner writes, 'I cannot bot lament Sir Richard Pigit, being a good man and an exellent old fation hous-Keeper, bot he was old & I pray God bles you with eas & happyness to his age & as many more years as God pleases.' Sir Ralph tells John how deeply he feels the death of this 'good old friend & neighbour, his Lady is very ill & my cousin Tom Pigot who is now heire to his uncle is somewhat amiss too & also severall of the servants, & all from colds, I pray God fit us all for Heaven.'

March 30, 1685

April 1, 1685

It was in the very crisis of the election contests, that friends and rivals met over the old knight's grave. 'Sir Richard Pigott was buried very honorably,' writes Sir Ralph to John, '& at a considerable charge, with 2 new Mourning Coaches & a Hearse, one of which Coaches & the Hearse had 6 Horses apiece. Wee that bore up the pall had Rings, Scarfs, Hat-bands, Shammee Gloves of the best fashion and Sarsanet Escutcheons delivered to us; the rest of the Gentry had Rings, all the servants gloves. Wee had burnt wine & Biscuits in great

April 5, 1685

plenty, all the very servants had burnt wine & Biscuit. I thank God my Cough is something better. I had forgotten to tell you that there were abundance of Escutcheons & all Sir Richard's servants were in mourning.'

Buckingham was now the scene of plots and counterplots and petty intrigues which lasted for many weary weeks. Sir Ralph's sons worked devotedly for him, each after his manner; Mun gouty, cordial and lavishly hospitable, freely sacrificed his digestion to his principles, and by constant carouses with the Buckingham electors, sought to counteract the ill effect of his father's austerity. He tells John 'as a very pleasant jest under the rose,' how after one of these feasts, 'Sir R. Temple & his man Monsieur Bennett, upon falling out, did exchange Dry Blows with one another,' as they drove back to Stow at night in Sir R. Temple's coach.

The White House, lying as it did on the high road between Aylesbury and Buckingham, lacked not picturesque gatherings of county worthies booted and spurred, riding to and fro between these centres of political activity; such guests were sure of a hearty welcome and a potent stirrup-cup, in return for the last bit of election gossip. Sir Ralph sends Mun a fresh supply of sherry-sack and advises him to keep 'sugar ready and the nutmeg cut but not grated, for I see the Philistines are coming upon you.' 'Mr. Harry Wharton,' Mun writes, 'Sir Peter

Tyrill & Captain Lile, Mr. Knowles & Mr. Haynes &c., called & drank at my Gates without alighting, & while they were there comes Sir Richard Temple, Sir Francis Leigh, Mr. Chesney, Mr. Anderson &c., & came all into my yard & drank; then our 5 Aldermen that were alighted at my house, remounted & waited on Sir R. T. to Buck^{m}. A little after he went away, my Lord Latimer went by in a Coach & six Horses, & about 14 Horse with him besides. My cosen Robin Dormer called in here, & says that he came from Addington & that Sir J. Busby is become a most mighty Tory.'

John, on the other hand, with his clear head and business capacity, obtained legal opinions on disputed questions, and bestirred himself amongst his town friends, whether lawyers, city merchants or court ladies, to defeat local wire-pullers by using tactics in higher circles not unlike their own. The brothers took counsel together upon every detail that might help or hinder their father's return to Parliament.

Mun reports that 'if my Lord Latimer will lay downe £300 for bullding the Townehall, He may prevayle to make his election sure.' This offer repeated at intervals, 'much balances with mercenary spirits, and My Lord puts in hard to be chosen.' . . . 'There are 3 inveterate against us, Mr. Hugh Ethersey, Mayor, Mr. Hartley & one Alderman Atterbury, but I hope we shall get 7 on our side & then it is not much matter for the rest. Mr. Mayor hath all along done all he can against my

father . . . . tomorrow morning I shall be going early to Buck^m. ad explorandum Hostem.' If a voter declined to be bribed, at least he might be kidnapped, and Henry Hayward, a disreputable Buckingham barber, was suddenly arrested for debt. As he was wont to shave the Verneys, Edmund concluded that 'my barber' was a safe vote. Great efforts were accordingly made to pay his debts, and to get him out of the Fleet. When this was done, Hayward 'coacht it down to Buckingham with his daughter,' in great state; but knowing his value 'my barber' treated his patron with distant politeness, and did not wish to entangle himself with any pledges or, as local opinion expressed it, 'the gaol bird has flown clear of them all.'

John Coleman and the rest of Sir Ralph's people are working hard for him in the borough, the Cook Nicholas is doing some efficient canvassing on his own account. 'The popular are resolved to set up two against the Bayliffe & Burgesses, & they that the Bayliffe and Burgesses chuse, the popular will not . . . . only the Cook thinks that one of the Constables being Sir Ralph's Saddler may be persuaded.'

The Addington carriages and horses are constantly seen in Buckingham; 'Sir John Busby rode through it twice, going and coming from Maydes Morton, and each time he alighted at the Mayor's house.' He is also paying court to the village of 'Leathenborough.'

Sir Ralph can hardly hope to overtake his civi-

lities, Lord Latimer's men are making their last efforts, but 'my Lord will not come from town unless he can get 7 of the 13 to subscribe for him.' March 23, 1685

John sends a bit of gossip on the all-absorbing topic of the seven Buckingham votes. 'Being yesterday at Nancy Nicholas' she pulled out a letter, tore out the name & bad me read it, twas I saw a Clerk's hand & began Sir.' Then the story of these infinitely petty intrigues is told again, how there are six votes for Sir Ralph and six for Lord Latimer, how 'a Draper being incognito had declared for Sir Ralph, but that this should prove of no avail.' Nancy left the room, and John, determined to discover the writer, flew to the place 'where the crumpled paper lay she had flung into the fire, but lighting on a Scotch coale it tumbled off into the Chimney, so I took it up & opened it and found the name to be Wm. Baker, he that married Mr. Ethersey's daughter.' Sir Ralph replies that Mr. Ethersey, the mayor, 'is wholly governed by my Lord Chief Justice . . . his sisters are heartily for me & cry & speak openly how much they are ashamed of their Brother. . . . I wish I had never been concerned in the business, for tis very Chargeable and woonderful Troublesome.' Jack Ethersey the Attorney is busy at Buckingham with his brother the mayor; 'Chaque Diable a son tour,' writes Jack Verney, 'once I was desired to be his friend when he putt in for a place in the Citty & I recommended him to some of the Chief Grocers for to be a Clark of their hall, & it may be in my power April 2, 1685

again (before he be a Judge) to doe him an other kindness or its contrary, which of 'em he may expect will be according to his carriage to you. . . . Lady Osborne told me my L[d] of D[evonshire] rails exceedingly at Sir R. T. and saith he will bring him on his knees in the house for keeping the precept 6 weeks after he had it, before delivered, and much such stuff. . . .'

Sir Ralph replies, 'Lord Latimer kept the precept 5 weeks when it was noe crime & tis usually donn in very many places. . . . Sir Rich. kept it but 17 dayes after hee first had it, many persons keep it much longer, therefore I beleeve Ly. Osborne understands not what she says about it.'

Stewkeley writes that 'L'Estrange & one Mr. Chaney, a very young man he is of y[r] Winslo, & a mighty favouritt of the L[d] Ch: Just. Jeff:'s are chosen for Winton.'

John has been running after Mr. Fall, a London solicitor known to the Aldermen at Buckingham, who might help if he could go down to work for Sir Ralph, but he finds him 'tyed by the leg to the Treasury office.' 'Dr. Denton says,' John continues, 'that the towne of Buck[m] was anciently against our family. My Grandfather having gotten the Assizes from Buck[m] to Wickham, & that you had angered them in a piece of Justice. But the Dr. being just then going into the Lady Sherard's door, I had not time to know of him in what, or to pump out whether he said this of his own knowledge or had it from your

good friend in a corner A. D[enton].' In 1679 'the king promised L^d^ Latimer that the Assizes should be at Buck^m^, but Sir Thos. Lee got Monmouth to beg they should be at Aylesbury, which was granted.' History repeats itself; some two hundred years later, Sir Harry Verney, when candidate for the same seat, was reproached with having removed the Quarter sessions from Buckingham to Aylesbury.

Sir Ralph was going about in Buckingham, coughing in the cold March winds, longing to be out of the ale and the noise, and peremptorily sent for to return, whenever he sought a little rest at Claydon. There was always a special reason. He must not be absent on market days; the mayor had complained that he had not called upon him of late; my Lord Latimer's man had given the wives and daughters of the burgesses a treat very recently, and Sir Ralph should do the same, and so on. Cook Nicholas felt sadly that his artistic cold collations were thrown away upon the thirsty Alderman.—'Wine is the most acceptable treate for them, with Anchois or such like thing, to draw downe Liquor.'

'I wish Buckingham election were over,' writes Lady Gardiner, 'and that you might have time to mend your health, which is of chifest moment to me, not bot I hope all will goe as I wod have it . . . there is like to be a good time for blistering, warm whether being best for that, & I am shur if you due not begin to take the asses milk quickly, you will have bot a short tim to take it.' April 1, 1685

John was also urgent with his father to be blistered, but Sir Ralph felt that he could not stand any more worries till after the polling day. His chief solace was an aromatic 'dish' which he made for himself at night; 'a noble fuddler of coffee,' Dr. Denton called him. He had laid in a frugal provision of two half-pound packets of coffee at 3*s.* a lb., which he hoped would carry him through his fatigues; but he was far from being at the end of them. It was now known that the polling for Buckingham would be delayed until after the Knights for the Shire had been chosen.

So far the Whigs had done well in the Bucks boroughs, but the great county struggle was yet to come. Dr. Denton reports 'mad work in many elections the Lord Chief Justice [Jeffreys] behaves himself bravely in all his circuit,' which he made into an electioneering tour; he was then detained in Essex, his temper being further soured by 'a fit of the stone.' Jeffreys was known to the Verneys, Mun had dined with him in town, and he owned a house in the county at which Charles II. visited him in 1678, '& causing Sir George Jeffreys to sit down at table with him, he drank to him seven times.' His favour at Court was still in the ascendant, and he was already famous for the violence and brutality of his temper. He was resolved to bring the terrible power of his personal influence to bear, in order to overawe the electors at Aylesbury. This contest was felt to be a crucial one. The candidates were Lord Brackley, Mr. Wharton,

and Mr. Hackett. Lord Brackley, by his own merit, and as son of the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Bridgewater, had won the support not only of the Whigs but of most of the moderate Tories of the county. His mother, Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, was famous for 'her winning behaviour and most obliging conversation,' her beauty, wit and piety, and Lord Brackley seems to have inherited something of her charm. Thomas, eldest son of Philip Lord Wharton, was a man of a very different type; he had a great reputation for wealth and extravagance. A popular sportsman, he had just been thrown by a rearing horse at Newport races, but recovered in time to rally his friends for a still more exciting contest. Able and unscrupulous, he represented a powerful Whig family living close to Aylesbury; he was personally obnoxious to King James, as having brought up the Exclusion Bill from the House of Commons to the Bar of the House of Lords.

Mr. Hackett, the Tory candidate, 'an unknown young gentleman of the neighbourhood of Newport Pagnell,' was Jeffreys' tool in his stubborn resolution, at all costs to keep out Wharton. In case this should fail, it was reported that the Lord Chief Justice 'with the rest of his gang, would at the last promote Hackett's election for Buckingham.'

Sir Ralph sent word to his agent to work up the tenants, and peremptorily desired Mr. Butterfield to exert himself in Mr. Wharton's interest 'among his brethren.' The rector, usually so compliant, returned

an evasive answer; he would see which side would most benefit the church; meanwhile he and Mr. Townshend were reported to be very busy; it was evident that the clergy would vote Tory. Persons of quality are bestirring themselves all over the county; 'my Lady Peter Tyrrill,' Sir Walter Raleigh's granddaughter, has been met 'in her coach & 4, driving furiously' to London; and Sir Thomas Bludworth has been heard to say that 'his brother the L^d^ Ch: Just: Jefferys will be at the Election of Knights of the Shire.'

Whatever weariness Sir Ralph confessed to in private, he was at his post when the great struggle commenced; his letter describes the unscrupulous tactics the Lord Chief Justice was prepared to employ.

'Alisbery, Thursday night.

'April 9, 1685. On Tuesday night I came heather, I thought the Pole would have been continued here till the Election had been ended, but some say Mr. Wharton having many more voices than Mr. Hackett, my L^d^. Ch. Justice got the Sheriff to adjourn the Poll to Newport (which is 15 very long miles from hence) in the heart of Mr. Hackett's friends, & tis thought it will be adjourned on Sat. morn^g^. from thence to Buckingham where Mr. Hackett has a good many friends, because next Sat. is Newport Fayre, & it would be inconvenient to have the Fayre & the pole together. Most are of opinion that this adjournment will lose my L^d^. Brackley 2 or 300

voyces, that cannot goe soe farre. Therefore my L[d] Brackley was against it, but my L[d]. Chief Justice like a Torrent carryes all before him. Some say that if Mr. Hacket is worsted in these parts then my Lord will get the Sheriffs to adjourn it to Beconsfield, where my L[d] Chief Justice has an Interest, being not farre from his House, but this is but a conjecture. Some things have happened here which are not fit to be put into a letter. . . . I have sent for my Coach & Horses to be here very early for I cannot goe soe farre as Newport, but I intend to go to Buck[m]. on Saturday if the poll be adjourned thither.'

Lord Macaulay has related the sequel, how Tom Wharton's friends reached Newport, only to find every available lodging engaged, and provender for man and beast already bought up; 'the Whig freeholders were compelled to tie their horses to the hedges & to sleep under the open sky, in the meadows which surround the little town.' But Jeffreys had misjudged his men; Wharton was full of pluck and was ready to spend 1,500*l.* a day; the result of the first day's polling was that 'my Lord Brackley had 2,430 voices & odd, Mr. Wharton had 1,804 with many hundreds yet to poll & Mr. Hackett had 1,207 & noe more to poll;' and so the two first were declared at Newport to be duly elected, and Jeffreys' further schemes fell through. More even than against the triumphant Wharton, the Lord Chief Justice's rage was directed against the frail figure of the old man who spoke and wrote so temperately,

but whose very presence at Aylesbury reminded the Bucks electors of the traditions of their best days. To have known and followed Hampden was the best support to men who might have quailed under Jeffreys' curses, 'this demi-fiend, this hurricane of man,' as the ballad-makers called him. Sir Ralph's friends had only one regret, that he had missed the final triumph at Newport; but he failed not to hear of 'the greate griefe of my L^d^. Ch Justice who in his passion fell upon many of the gentry, but most upon me, tho' I was not there, I was a Trimmer & soe he would tell my L^d^. Keeper who was my friend.'[1] A few days later Wharton, the hero of the hour, won 'the four score pounds plate at Brackley races. T'was a gold tumbler, a fork & a handle for a knife. Sir Charles Shugburgh & Mr. Griffith ran against him.'

Cary Gardiner is jubilant, and only longs to have a war of wits with the terrible Lord Chief Justice.

April 15, 1685 'I wish I could come in company with that mighty man, that spits his venham in every place at you,' she writes to her brother; 'I long to see him bot not out of love, bot fancy I could hit him more homb then hee can you, & wod due & mildly too; hee deserves to bee told his erour tho' not afronted for his Master's sake, who I think hee dus great predygys to instead of sarving; and fancy it will be thought so in time, raling not becomeing his grandeure. I would goe forty miles to meet him amonxt parsons

[1] 'Guildford was treated by Jeffreys with marked incivility, and the surest way to propitiate the Ld. Ch. Just: was to treat the Ld. Keeper with disrespect.'—Macaulay, *Hist. Eng.*, i. p. 454.

of quollity, as for the Maior he is a pityfull fellow . . . old as I am I hope I shall see them both under other sircumstances. I wish them better before death seizes them.'

'I hear many accusations against you my Lord Chief Justice maks, bot I bileve only whot I think, not pinning my faith to his girdle, I pray God he may not use any ill courses to set you a side the election. . . . I hate the world every day more & more, & find most falchod in church, pretending to religion.' Mun 'sate up all night in Buckingham drinking with the High Sheriff, Sir R. T. & Mr. Mayor,' after the county victory, and Captain Pigott 'lay ill at Aylesbury after drinking too hard all through the election.' 'Sir Samuel Grimston hath lost his election at St. Albans, but he carried it very indiscreetly, soe that he hath scarce a pretence to petition the House.' The Eure heiresses, both now married, have rival candidates for their borough of Malden; Captain Fairfax is returned, and not Mr. Wortley, by which it appears that 'Cousin Danby has got the victory over Cousin Palmes.' April 12, 1685

Public attention was for the moment withdrawn from the contests, and fixed upon the great preparations made for King James's coronation on St. George's Day. The Duke of Ormond has arrived, 'many persons of Quality attended him into town, there were about 40 coaches.' April 23, 1685

'His Maj^tie dined by invitation on board the Loyall James an East India Shipp, but the Entertain-

ment was extremely mean & Bread & Cheese both wanting, as the report goeth.'

Penelope Osborne has ordered a new chariot on which her father's arms are to be painted, and her horses at Claydon are to be fetched up from grass and put 'in flesh' as fast as possible that they 'may be no discredit to the Coach.' She needs it urgently as she has a swelling on one foot 'as bigg as a Wolnut.' Lame and withered as she is she begs Sir Ralph specially to remember her 'Beauty Water.' Penelope has crowds of callers, ladies of the highest fashion having suddenly remembered her existence, as she is 'known to have a good interest' with Henry's old friend 'the Earl of Peterborough, father in law to my Lord Marshall,' who has seats to assign for the coronation. Penelope is not nice in these matters, and enjoys the situation. Young Ralph and his brother Edmund, with Denton Nicholas and a number of undergraduate friends, are posting up to town, where the Verney lads are hospitably entertained by Aunt Gardiner.

'I think if both the brothers come,' she writes, 'they must ly in my back rome, they will not be with us before 5 a'clok in the morning; my neveugh Ralph must bring his best cloths, none must bee ther in blak, that is forbid in print by my Lord Martiall. All the scafolds are lined & canopys over them to keep of rain, so all is very fine, all parsons visits the places of show to see the manner of it & many as will not be ther that day gos now. . . . My

Cossin Georg Nicholas has been to see the preparations, & says tis not so fue as 100,000 people may stand to see it on the scaffolds in Westr Hall & the Pallis yard & in all the Church-yard of St. Margaret's at Westr & all the hustings along & many comes from beyound sea to see it, which you may guess the reson of.'

'Your grandsons shall be with me,' she writes again to Sir Ralph, 'wher my Lady Anne Grimston & her daufters are, & Mrs Bartley & Lady Tichborn & her daufters with more of my frinds, whom I am to condoct tomorrow to the place of standing wher we sit up all night, chusing it as the less disorder, becaus after 5 a clok on thursday morning no coach shall be soffered to pass Whithall & tis bilieved no coach shall pass after wensday night, & to avoid ill crouds we intend to sit up, & your grandsons shall have their sleep out beefore they goe. My Lady Warick saw the quens crown isterday, & ther is to the vallew of neer £200,000 uppon it, & shee will bee all over Jewels besids; never any quen was so richly decked, all conclude by many thousands, a world of Jewels shee borrows, a fair day is now chifly wisht for. On Saturday the king was pleasd to send to my Lord Pois to let him know he had the sword the pope sent King Hary the eight, and that he should have the honour to carry it beefore him on ister day, for the sord as was Carryed before the late king is layd Aside, Heare is nothing bot great & gloryous things publickly talked of, bot I doubt

not bot ther is thousands as prays only for Immortall glory wch in god's good time grant to you & all yours & me & all mine wch shall conclud this from yr. affec. sister & sarvant Cary Gardiner. Sent this tuesday morning expecting a croud of people this day & tomorrow.' The weather was dry and unusually hot for April, propitious for a function. 'Tis said the King will walk to his Parliament thorow King St. in his Parliament Robes & that all the Peeres shall be the same with their coronets, purposely to gratifye his people that they may see a splendid show.' 'Profuse where he ought to have been frugal & niggardly where he might pardonably have been profuse,'[1] the procession from the Tower was omitted by James on account of expense, while he lavished double the money on the Queen's trinkets. On Easter Sunday 'the rites of the Church of Rome were once more after an interval of 127 years performed at Westminster with regal splendour.' The streets swarmed with priests, while the Lord Mayor, who applied for the ancient right of representing the City as cupbearer at the coronation, 'was told by the Lord Keeper the claim was not good now the charter is forfeited.' The reception of the special Embassy from Holland was dreadfully bungled. 'As they came up the River,' John writes, 'they lowered their fflagg to the King's Castles, but put it up againe, on wch the then Gov^r^ fired 2 bullets one a head tother astern, but they not taking on't downe

[1] Macaulay, *History of England*, i. 472.

he fired soe again. Then the Embassadors (pretending whilst they are on board tis not usuall to take it quite downe) came on shoare and twas taken downe presently. . . . Van Sitters here joynd with the two Dutch Embassadors that came over; they are in great state, having each 6 Pages, 10 footmen & other Retinue answerable, & have taken a great house in St. James' Square but a publique entry is not granted them.'

'I am glad the Elections & Coronation is over,' murmurs old Betty Adams, 'ther was so much discors about them that one would thinck that thay forgot to tolck of aney thing els, but nothing can make me forget my soroes.'

Sir Ralph could not yet put elections aside, the Borough had still to be won, and Jack Stewkeley writes of the 'foul play played Sir Ralph at Buck^m^. by staving off the election and not allowing him to know the probable date of it.' 'All imaginable endeavours have been used to get over any one of his seven Voyces, but they are as firm to us as rocks,' Mun writes, 'but we know what tricks they may play us, & then there is no fence for a flaile but a Barne Door.' It soon appeared that a formidable plot was brewing; the Mayor threatened to report one of the Whig Aldermen, Dancer, a tanner, to the King for words against the Government; if Dancer could be summoned to London on however trumpery a charge, the election could be held in his absence and Sir Ralph would lose the seat. The only hope of defeating this trick was by making it public, and

Sir Ralph, on behalf of himself, his colleague and his party, desired his son John to wait upon the Lord Chief Justice, to offer bail for Dancer's appearance as soon as the election should be over, but to protest against any of the aldermen being forced to absent themselves before that day. Jack hears that 'Carter a tipstaffe has gone to Buck^{m}. to bring up Dancer,' he has been talking over the matter with Ethersay the attorney. 'I find him a Rude, Passionate fellow, & Sir Richard tells me his brother the Mayor is ten times more passionate than he, I wonder how Sir Rich. who is boyling water & the Mayor doe, to set their horses together . . . hot-headed people that can't speak sense, hate to heare it.' 'Ethersay saith you called the town of Buckingham a nest of Bastards & Beggars—I told him I could not believe a man of your wisdom should speak such ill words . . . then he said you never spent 20 shillings in Buck^{m}. in 20 years—but I found he meant in Ale, & truly I doe believe it, but my Lady Gardiner told him that he knew you hated to goe to any alehouse. He stands much upon the honour of his family & saith 'twas formerly the best in that town, except Sir Richardson, I fancy his ancestors came out of Wales, & he retains still some Welsh hott blood in him.' Sir Ralph replies that the absurd stories of his being 'against Buck^{m}. are some 11 years, & the latest 6 yeares, old . . . tis true I have not spent 20 shillings in Ale (except on the occasion of this and my former election), nor shall I

doe it if I live 20 yeares longer, but I am sure the men of Buck^m^. have had several £20 of me for Work, & for things that I have bought of them. . . . I found Sir R. T. in a calmer humour then when he writ me an angry peevish letter about Mr. Dancer's being put out of the Commission of the peace. . . . I am noe way fond of this imployment, beleeve me those that are out of the House are much happier then those that are in; & within few months you will bee of my mind I'le warrant you.' Cary hears that Sir Ralph's name has been brought up at the Council table, and that Sir R. Temple complains passionately that by his friendship with him he has lost the King's favour. The plot against Dancer goes on, and he and another alderman are to be turned out of the Commission of the Peace.

Sir Ralph and Sir Richard Temple desired John to get counsel's opinion about the Buckingham Charter and to give a guinea or two for it. He went first to Henry Pollexfen, but that wise man would not meddle with the case, as soon as he had looked into it. 'In vain,' John says, 'I played with the gold in my fingers;' he protested that 'now Reason signifies nothing he will have nothing to do with such matters.' May 5, 1685

Pollexfen had shown considerable courage in defending the City Charter, he was afterwards the champion both of the Seven Bishops and of Baxter the nonconformist, and was accounted 'a thorough-stitch enemy to the crown,' but he had reasons of his own for not meddling with an election in which Jeffreys

was so much interested, and before the end of the summer he was employed by the Lord Chief Justice, in whose hands all legal patronage was now vested, to conduct the prosecutions after Monmouth's rebellion.

Baffled here, John turned to another eminent man, John Holt, son of the recorder of Abingdon, and educated in the Free School there, whom Sir Ralph must have known well. He was famous for his integrity and his knowledge of the law, but he too was looking to Jeffreys for promotion. He listened coldly, and scratched his head, but was persuaded to read the papers '& said sure the man (Ethersay) was madd for an Alderman to talk soe, this he repeated 2 or 3 times,' but when pressed to say whether he would give an opinion, he doubted whether he had the time, remembered that 'it was the last day of Terme & that he must go visit the Judges.' John left the papers with him that he might consider them at leisure. But when he called again, Holt 'seemed rather more cold, & said he would not give anything under his hand or have to doe in the case.' John's labours were not yet over, some affidavits were required from the Lord Keeper's Office; 'I went 10 times for a copy of 'em, still could not have it, one Secretary had 'em not, another was gone out to Whitehall, I came againe & he was at a Taverne where at last I found him; they cost 6 shillings, that is 5^{s} to y^{e} Secretary & 1^{s} to the Porter.' Serjeant Leake, whom John caught at last, and persuaded to look into the case, was most discou-

raging. He said, 'twas nothing now to turn out men, many in a day, to disfranchize 'em, and then there's no remedy but by a writt of mandamus, which before that can restore them, the Election will be over & the turn served.'

Holt was soon after made Recorder of London; both he and Pollexfen sat with Sir Ralph in the Convention Parliament, and became distinguished judges. But though even the great Whig lawyers declined to help them, the Corporation of Buckingham proved less compliant than the Government expected, and refused to join 'in soe foule a practice against 2 of their brethren.'

The resistance to Sir Ralph suddenly collapsed; Sir John Busby seems to have been thrown over by his own party, and the defeated county candidate, Mr. Hackett, never appeared. Sir Ralph writes to John at the end of the long day, having got back to Claydon at ten o'clock: 'This morning Sir R. T. & myself were elected at Buck^m^ without any noyse or trouble. Mr. Atterbury was not there, nor did my Lord Latimer come down, so the whole 12 Electors signed the book for Sir R. T. & 7 signed for me, after which the Mayor sent for us upp into the Towne Hall, & declared the Election & sealed the Indenture or Returne with the Towne Seale & then all the 12 Electors put their hands to it, & delivered it to one to carry to the Sheriffs tomorrow morning. The Populace went to the Towne Hall & civilly demanded the Pole for my L^d^ Latimer & my Cozen

May 15, 1685

Greenfield of Foscut, but the Mayor told them hee could not grant it, soe they went away & poled a little while & then seperated without noyse or tumult.'

When the same members were returned for Buckingham in 1681, they were expected to give 'to each clerk that took the poll, being foure, a guinea,' 'to the men that got superscriptions for them, the like, being 3 or 4 & also to pay for drawing the intentions and the exposition all the day of the Election,' besides their agents' expenses 'in riding about & paying of messengers,' upon which Colman expressed his opinion that 'tis a great charge to be chosen a Parliament man.' On May 21, Sir Ralph has taken his seat, and has forgotten his ailments in the interest of resuming his House of Commons work. He is sitting by Sir Charles Gawdy and other old friends; and goes down to Westminster so early, that those who want to see him must call before 8 o'clock in the morning. He is lodging at 'Capt. Paulden's house, over against the Crosse Walke in Holborn Row in Lincoln's Inn feilds.' The Commons are

May 26, 1685 agitated with questions of orthodoxy, 'the Grand Committee for Religion have voted, that the House should address a Remonstrance to the King to desire that a proclamation might issue out to put the Lawes in Execution against all dissenters from the Ch. of England whatsoever. . . . The House sitts not this

May 28, 1685 day being Holy Thursday, nor tomorrow being the 29th of May.' Their proceedings are watched with sanguine expectations in the country.

'Will you be in London,' Sir William Petty writes to a friend, 'when the Parliament sits, & help to do such things for the common good that no King since the Conquest, besides his present Majesty can so easily effect?'

John is chiefly anxious that his father should not be over tired; he has 'little stomach to his food.' 'I would not have you goe soe much on foot . . . walking in London differs much from doeing so in the Country open aire. In London the roughness of the treading, the rubbing by the people, & the bustle of 'em, wearies the body, & giddyes & dozeth the head; and if you must walke, why should you not goe in your Coach to Hampstead, Highgate or any other way & there alight & walke for such a convenient time as you shall judge fitt & soe home againe with some friend to bear you company & talke to, but really, to walke about the streets I cannot think it wholesome for you at all.'

'Childe,' replies Sir Ralph, 'I thank you kindly for your care of my Health, but the bustle of a parliament will not suffer me to take the aire at such a distance, & especially at first when we are generally tyed to more constant attendance, either on the House or his Maj^{ties} person. I goe not on foote but when the weather is faire & coole, & then I doe well to favour my Horses & to save my Coach, which is more prejudiced by one day here, than it probably can in Tenn in the Country, the Stones being ready to shake it in pieces. I have now sent you the King's

Speech, the same day we voted him for his Life, all the Revenue that was settled upon his Brother for his life . . . divers petitions against Elections were brought in—my cousin Palmes brought in one for Malton & my L[d] Latimer & my Cousin Greenfield brought in another against Sir R. T. & mee for Buck[m].'

The laws which the House of Commons was anxious to put in force against Papists were a formidable weapon against Protestant dissenters of Whig proclivities. After Monmouth's rebellion

June 25, 1685

'Noncon: Ministers' were more than ever persecuted; Lord Abingdon, the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, writes to Lord Clarendon: 'I am endeavouring as fast as I can, to pick up the worst men about the country, but cannot yet meet with one Nonconformist parson, having taken some pains heretofore to ferret them out.' A manifesto was issued at the Devon Quarter Sessions in October '85, offering 3*l.* to any one who should apprehend one, and stating that 'considerable numbers of them were actually in the late Rebellion, fit Chaplains indeed for such a Mushroom King & fit Spiritual Guides for such lewd Rebels.' A distressed appeal reaches Sir Ralph from 'Samuel Clarke a Non: Con:' whose career might stand as an epitome of the changes which England had passed through in the life of one generation. A highly educated Cambridge man 'of great moderation,' he had lost his fellowship at Pembroke Hall by refusing to sign the engagement

under the Long Parliament. During the Protectorate, he was presented to the rectory of Grendon Underwood by Squire Pigott of Doddershall, in succession to old Thomas Howe. He had the reputation of being an excellent preacher and a learned Biblical scholar; he was so much opposed to the high-handed action of the Church of England after the Restoration, that he and his two sons gave up their livings in 1662. Philip, Lord Wharton, protected him at Winchendon 'from the face of the spoiler.' Persecution drove him further and further from Episcopacy, but he devoted his blameless old age to compiling a Bible Concordance and other works; he founded what in Puritan phrase was called 'a gathered Church' in his own house at Wycombe, and died suddenly while conducting the devotional exercises of his people in 1701. Being held by this time 'in much esteem,' the Church, so unkind a stepmother to Clarke in life, received him back in death, and he was buried in the chancel of the parish church at Wycombe.[1] But when he wrote to Sir Ralph in 1685, the days of toleration were not yet, and he had just been seized in the parish of his old patron at Doddershall. '3 Troopers of my L^d^ Brackly's Troop, brought a warrant signed by 6 Dep: Lieftenants,' Sir John Busby being of the number . . . 'to secure Mr. Kent (one of the obnoxious Aldermen who had voted for Sir Ralph) Mr. Nit, (who is Mr.

[1] Gibbs' *Worthies of Bucks*, p. 103; Parker's *History Wycombe*, p. 162.

Hampden's chaplain) & myself.' They were detained at the Red Lion Inn at Aylesbury, and could find no magistrate to whom they could appeal to be tried or released. Clarke having been known to Sir Ralph a great while, and never having given cause for 'the least umbrage of suspition,' begs him to intercede for them with the Lord Lieutenant. 'Tis true our confinement is not strict & we are treated with all manner of civility by the officers here, yet not being conscious of having ever either don or spoken anything which may deserve so much, I doe humbly sue for a discharge.'

The magistrate and the dissenter found the rigour of their natural relations to each other much softened by the gardening tastes they had in common; it was not the first time that Sir Ralph had saved the Non. Con. from the persecutions of the law, and the latter while deploring his prelatical leanings, allowed that Sir Ralph was an accomplished grower of grapes. As David had accepted the protection of Achish, King of Gath, the Elect in these evil days might do well to propitiate so kindly a Philistine, and accordingly some choice vines reached Claydon from Winchendon, that Mr. Clarke considered to be 'exactly season'd & suited to Sir Ralph's palate,' and which he begged him to accept from 'A real Honourer of your worth & your highly lowly servant.'

Sir Ralph's 'rarities' in his house and garden have more than a local reputation; he writes to John (in 1681):—

'When your Brother & I were gon to Radcliffe about 12 o'clock, there came hether a very handsome young and gentile person, with a Gentleman and 3 more servants in livery; all extreamly well Horsed, & armed with Pistolls, & Carbines; & desired to see the House, the Church, Gardens, & Parke; & went all over the Roomes, & other places, and told my Bucks, & would goe to the Hay Ricks, to see how I had contrived it that the younger & weaker Deere might come in; & sayd hee knew mee very well, & spake of mee & my Election at Buckingham, very perticulerly; but neither Hee nor any of his 4 servants would tell his name, nor discover who hee was, though they were severally asked, but hee still replied, "Doe not you know mee? Sure you doe." They Dranke a Bottle of sack, very civilly & went away, & noe body knowes either who hee was, or whence hee came, or wether hee went.'

John Verney and his wife at Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, met the impetuous Whartons again: 'Yesterday morning Capt. Henry Wharton comeing to the Wells, bade a Coachman drive out of the way for the D. of Norfolk was comeing, but the coachman haveing broke some harness, said the D. of N. must waite if he came, or words to that effect, on which Harry W. Knockt him downe, then Dr. Jefferyes (Broth: to the L[d] Ch. J.) lookt out of the Coach & askt the reason of the action; the Captaine bade him come out of the Coach, & he would serve him soe too: this hath angered his Lordshipp, but I Aug. 16, 1685

presume (for the Duke's sake) tis husht up. Thom. Wharton is here. . . . This Place is very full of company, soe that lodgeings are very hard to be gotten & consequently deare, as are all provisions here. The Prince hath returned to the Court but the Princess is still here.'

Aug. 23, 1685 Sir Ralph replies from Claydon: 'The rashness of Capt. Harry Wharton brings him into more disputes & troubles then can bee expressed, as hee growes older I hope hee will bee every day more weary of such Brangline Broyles. On Thursday next is the race at Quainton Meadow then his brother Tom, & perhaps Harry Wharton too may probably be there.'

'Our country talk,' writes Mun a little later, 'is that my Lord Scaresdale, L^{d} Spencer, M^{r}. Tho: Wharton & his brother Harry went to Ethrop, & whipped the Earle of Carnarvan in his owne house & didd some other Peccadillios in his Castle besides. . . Capt. Bertie was sent for to reliefe the Castle & I hear he did come accordingly, but the Bravos were all gone first.'

Sir Ralph's own life was saddened by the loss of a friendship that could never be replaced. 'Sir,' wrote John Stewkeley, 'the good Lady Gawdy is dead.'

Their correspondence had continued till within a few days of her death: 'The honour you allow me of your friendship,' she writes, 'gives me this liberty thus to follow you into all places where you reside

to make my acknowledgments of your favours, & to lay my thankes at your feete, I am hopeless Sir, ever to sarve you, but to bee found in the traine of your obleged is A pleasur I will never mis by my neglect.'

Lady Gawdy had been very suffering and sleepless, but she wrote bravely asking her old friend's help, to wind up some money matters which concerned her younger children, that her eldest son and executor 'may have his sorrow & debts for me made as easy as I can to him.' . . . 'Your obleging letter makes my spirit diligent to pass out at all ports, to meete you with the most grateful reception.' Twenty years before Sir Ralph had said of her that she managed her affairs with 'temper, justice & moderation even beyond his expectation in all the wayes of kindnesse & friendship.' She now commended her children and grandchildren to his care, thanked him once more for his counsel and kindness during her thirty-five years of widowhood, and begged him to burn her letters, that 'no stranger eye may censure them hereafter,' she had burnt all his, for this reason. Sir Ralph evaded a promise; 'My Respects like Rivers pay tribute to the Ocean of your Favours,' he writes, but he was then in town, and the letters were in the country treasured as his most precious possessions. In their faithful and noble friendship there had been nothing to conceal; this was the only request of hers which he did not feel bound to grant; at least the letters are at Claydon still.

Lady Vere Gawdy 'was four days a dying,' in grievous pain, but mistress of herself to the end.

July 21, 1685

Sir Charles informs Sir Ralph that 'she left this world on Monday morning, & this poor family miserable in the want of her. . . . Upon my returne from London I found my Deare Mother so apparently mending for the first two days, as truly I thought I had ground for those hopes, which God knows the zeal of my soul formed into wishes for her recovery. Butt after that little intermission, the assaults of her diseas grew furious & such a contest between her payne & her cheerfulness, as I beleeve you scarse ever saw. Her patience & devotion are impressions upon me nothing can eradicate, her tenderness & care for every one, nay her abilitie, lasted as longe as her sences & they parted not from her till her life. She had in her muf, which shee always wore when out of her bed, a letter of yours & one of mine.'

The spring of 1685 had been hot and dry; no rain fell at Claydon for many weeks; Sir Ralph's gardener, Henry Teem, was weary of watering; the strawberries were fading and the peas would hardly keep for his worship's return. Mistress Anne Woodward, one of the Denton sisters, who was accustomed to distil 'the Cordyall Water' for Sir Ralph, that he would not willingly be without, mourns over her withered herbs 'which have little or no goodness in them,' and the 'rosemary which is quite gone out of our country, that will be much missed in the Water.'

In the sultry days of this parched June, the terrible tragedy of Monmouth's landing, his brief success, and crushing defeat, was being enacted in the west of England. The home counties shared in the excitement; Betty Adams writes that Baddow is full of soldiers, 'our malisha being all in arms.'

Parliament was suddenly prorogued in July, and Sir Ralph went down at once into the country. On revisiting Buckingham he was escorted back to Claydon with torches, and caught cold, as his family remarked with severity, because he would not suffer the glasses of his coach to be put up.

Mun, suffering and depressed, with gout in the eyes and a terribly ulcerated leg, remained behind in the doctor's hands: 'Mee thinkes this place is very uncouth to me now you are gone out of it,' he writes to his father, '& my Heart feels a kind of Horror of it, for want of the usual & dayly enjoyment of your delightful Company, which it Loves beyound expression & ever will. . . . My eyes continue bad enough still, I have clapt a plaister of Bergamo Pitch on the Pole of my Neck, which I think hath done me some good tho' not much.' John writes on the 15th: 'Yesterday the late Duke of Monmouth, & the late Lord Gray & the German were brought Pinnioned Prisoners in 2 Coaches (by my Lord Lumley) to Fox Hall, thence by L^d^. Dartmouth in Barges to Whitehall, & after some stay there in the Barges to the Tower.' The next letters are full of the horror of Monmouth's end, 'on the weeping Saint's day,' as Lady Gardiner

July 15, 1685

July 16, 1685 says. 'After begging mercy of His Majesty in terms very abject,' he had roused himself on the fatal morning to meet death with dignity. On July 15, 'between 10 & 11 in the morning, he was executed on Tower Hill. On the Scaffold there were 4 divines, the Bps. of Ely, Bath & Wells, Dr. Tenison, & Dr. Hooper, he said little but answers, & did sometimes turn from them when they asked him Severall Quest^ns^. one after another; but he dyed very resolutely, neither with Affectation nor dejectedness, but with a courageous moderation. The Executioner had 5 blowes at him, after the first he lookt up, & after the third he put his Leggs a Cross, & the Hangman flung away his Axe, but being chidd tooke it againe & gave him tother two strokes; and severed not his Head from his body till he cut it off with his Knife. This Joseph told me,' Mun writes, '(who once served my Lady Gardiner), I mett him coming from Tower Hill, where he saw the Execution done.'

With advancing years, Sir Ralph finds town life more and more trying to him; 'Whether or noe you drink Asses' Milke you must expect to cough, when you come to London,' is Dr. Denton's cheerful comment upon one of his many colds. He complains that he cannot drink Asses' milk at all in town, 'for the D^rs^ (and perticulerly D^r^ Tower) tell theire patients, that tis soe foul with sutt, smoke, & Dust, that it hath very little Vertue in it.' He returns to Claydon in the spring of 1686, and writes thence to

John, who has exhorted him to keep 'within & warme.'

'Childe,—I prayse God wee came well home about 5 a'clock on Friday, but my Coach was stuck in my coz: Winwood's Lane (called Stirke Lane) that I was forced to bee drawne out with a Teeme . . . . My Lord Wenman I heare is very ill, soe that he hath 2 Drs. with him from Oxford, therefore he must needes bee in greate danger. To humour you I have stayed within dores ever since I came home, only I was at Church this day, but have not yet been in my Parke, Gravell Walke, nor Elme Grove, yet this day I am growne Hoarse & finde noe abatement of my cough but I am sure that staying within Dores is very unusual to me, & much against my owne inclinations and indeed very Tiresome to

'Your affᵃᵗᵉ father, R. V.' Feb. 28, 1686

Dr. Denton writes: 'I am sensible of our neighbour Lord Wenman's dying, and would help all if I could, but we strive against an Act of Parlt. made in Heaven, & must submitt. My Lord Wenman, my old schoolfellow and friend, is 4 or 5 yeares younger then I, wch gives me fresh occasion to bless God for my great share of health in my olde daies. I pray God I may make good use of it . . . . I could wish you would take sugar of roses with yr. asses' milke.'

Sir Ralph was apt to do a little doctoring of his own behind the good physician's back. 'In my Pocket,' he writes to John, 'I found this Dirty March 7, 1686

Printed Paper, you know I love a mountebanke therefore at your owne leasure buy me a Role of Extract of Licoris ; 'tis but a shilling & lay up thes paper that if I send for more you may know where to find it.'

May 1, 1686

Edmund writes a few weeks later:—'My old Lord Wenman is dead & now there is a great windfall at Twyford, come to Dr. Adams Rector of Lincoln Coll : in Oxford, who I ghuesse will have the discretion to make the best of it.' Two hundred years later Lord Wenman's land figured in a Bucks Election, when the men of Twyford, desiring in their turn 'to make the best of it,' applied to Lincoln College to let it to them ; it furnished a topic hotly discussed by the local politicians on both sides, and the Twyford allotments case attained to a more than local notoriety.

CHAPTER X.

AN OXFORD UNDERGRADUATE IN THE REIGN OF JAMES II.

1685–1688.

'Some to the learned Universities.'

'I DESIGNE you for the Universitie, if you are fit for it, for I hope in God you will take to some honourable profession of your own accord, if not I am resolved you shalbe of a meane one for of some Profession, High or Low, I will make you, for I abhor you should go sauntering up & down like an idle lazy Fellow, and soe God blesse you.' Nov. 26, 1684

The boy thus admonished was Edmund Verney, second son of Edmund Verney and Mary Abell of East Claydon; he was sixteen, and a few months later his father entered him as a 'fellow-commoner' at Trinity College, Oxford. Jan., 1685

Sir Ralph had been brought up at Magdalen Hall; but Sir Francis Verney, of the former generation, had been at Trinity, and several of the boy's friends were already there. Philip Bertie, son of Robert Earl of Lindsay, whose father had been Mr. Cordell's pupil when Sir Ralph lived at Blois, was admitted in February 1683, aged eighteen. Denton Nicholas, Dr. Denton's grandson, went to Trinity in 1681, aged

sixteen, and was now about to take his degree. Ralph Palmer, only brother of Mrs. John Verney, had been there nearly a year. John Butterfield and Simon Aris, probably relatives of the present and the former rectors of Claydon, were Trinity undergraduates about this time. Josias Howe, a famous royalist divine (son of Sir Ralph's old neighbour, for more than fifty years Rector of Grendon Underwood), was one of the lights of Trinity; he had been deprived of his fellowship by the Parliamentary Visitors in 1648, but it was restored to him by Charles II., and he resided in the College till his death in 1701.

There was a great deal of bustle and excitement in getting the boy's outfit together. He noted with pride his 'new sylver hilted sword, his new striped Morning gown,' and his '6 new laced Bands whereof one is of Point de Loraine.'[1]

[1] He is thus entered in the Trinity College Admission Register:—

Ego *Edmundus Verney* filius Edmundi Verney Armigeri de East Claydon in Com: Bucks: natus ibidem Annorum circiter 16, Admissus sum Primi ordinis Commensalis Mense Januarii $168\frac{4}{5}$ sub tutamine magistri Sykes.

And the following fees were paid:—

Jan 23. $168\frac{4}{5}$	£	s.	d.
Received then of Mr. Edmund Verney. Ten pounds being Caution money laid into Trinity College, Oxon: I say, Received by me.	10	0	0

JOHN CUDWORTH BURSR

Received also one pound ten shillings for utensils.

Item, for the New Building £15
Item, for the Comon room £2

Jan: 23. $168\frac{4}{5}$	£	s.	d.
Received then of Mr. Edmund Verney the sum of one pound and eight shillings to be payd to the College servants for his admission into Trinity College Oxon: I say received by me.	1	8	0

THO: SYKES.

Stephen Penton, chaplain to the Earl of Aylesbury, has left us a quaint account of his parting with a son, whom he took up to the University about the same time. Father, mother, and sisters accompanied the lad to Oxford, and received his tutor at an inn, where that learned person delivered a discourse to the family council, of so alarming a nature on all that the undergraduate was and was not to do, that as soon as he had left the room 'the boy clung about his mother and cry'd to go home again, and she had no more wit than to be of the same mind; she thought him too weakly to undergo so much hardship as she foresaw was to be expected. My daughters (who instead of Catechism and Lady's Calling) had been used to reade nothing but speeches in romances, hearing nothing of Love and Honour in all the talk, fell into downright scolding at him, call'd him the merest scholar and if this were your Oxford breeding, they had rather he should go to Constantinople to learn manners. But I who was older and understood the language call'd them all great fools.'[1]

Edmund was spared any such scene, as his father allowed him to go to Oxford alone. The last day had been occupied with the packing and making lists (such was the orderly family usage) of the clothes, bed-linen, and table-linen with which his father supplied him. On January 21, 1685, he left home, and

[1] *Reminiscences of Oxford by Oxford Men.* By Lilian Quiller Couch, p. 49 (Oxford Hist. Soc.).

on the 22nd his father wrote him the first of a long series of affectionate letters in which he followed every detail of his son's college career.

'For Mr. Edmund Verney at his chamber in Trinity College in Oxford, or at Mr. Thomas Sykes his Tutor's Chamber in the same College. With a Box And a Trunk.

London, Jan. 22, 1685

'Child, I shalbee very joyfull to Heare of yr safe Arrivail at Oxford, according to my kind Wishes wch. attended you all the Way for yr prosperous journey.

'I Have this Day sent you (By Thomas Moore ye Oxon Carryer) All yr things mentioned in this enclosed Note, except yr old Camelote Coate, wch. I Didd not think you would need nor worth sending: yr old Hatt I Didd not send neither, for it was soe Badd that I was ashamed of it. All yr new Things I Bought you I Put into a new Box Lockt up, and well Corded up, and the Key of this Box I Have also Here-enclosed for you: but for the Key of yr Trunk I could not find it, and its no matter, for that Lock is nothing worth: and Thom: made a shift to Lock it wth. a Key of myne: and it is well Corded besides: In yr. old Breeches wch. are in yr new Box, you will find yr five Laced-Bands (the sixt you Carryed with you) and a new payre of Laced Cuffes: And yr two Guinnies in yr fobb, and a new Knife and forke in yr. great Pocket. And so God Blesse you, and send you Well to Do. I am yr. Loving father Edmund Verney.'

'In yr. trunk I Have putt for you
18 Sevill Oranges
6 Malaga Lemons
3 pounds of Brown sugar
1 pound of white poudered sugar made up in quarters
1 lb of Brown sugar Candy
¼ of a lb of white sugar candy
1 lb of pickt Raisons, good for a Cough
4 Nutmeggs.'

A week passed without any reply from the boy, and his father wrote again.

'Child,—When I take any Journey I always write unto my father By every opportunity a perfect Diurnall of my Voyage, and what else occurs worthy of Remarq: I writt to you a Letter this Day sevennight when I sent you yr Trunk and Box But never Hadd any answer nor account from you since: wch. is such a peece of Omission in you, to say no worse, that I Believe neither Oxford nor Cambridge can Paralell. For why I should Bee thus Neglected By my sonne I cannot imagine: indeed I looke upon it as an ill Omen, that you should committ such a grosse solecisme at yr first Entrance into the University against yr Loving father Edmund Verney.' Jan. 29, 1685

Letters from Oxford to London are from three to five days on the road, and one from young Edmund had miscarried.

The answer when it came showed all a fresh-

man's nervous anxiety to do the correct thing. The outfit which had looked so handsome at home, seems inadequate and rustic now, and in his self-conscious shyness young Edmund imagines that all Oxford is laughing at him.

Oxon. Feb. 2, 1685

'Most Honoured Father,—I want a Hatt, and a payre of Fringed Gloves very much, and I Desire you to send me them if you can possibly before Sunday next, for as I Come from Church Every body Gazeth upon me and asketh who I am. This I was Told by a friend of Myne, who was asked by Two or Three who I was.'

London, Feb. 11, 1685

'Child, ... I ffind you Have Payd the Taylor for making yr Gowne and Cappe: But that you cannot Bee Matriculated these 3 weekes yet, untill you are Better skilled in the Orders or Statutes of yr College or University: therefore I Pray Learne them as soone as you Can.

'I will send you yr Bible wth yr Hatt &c: And so I Conclude Beseeching Almighty God to Have you in his Keeping.'

Feb. 16, 1685

'Most Honoured Father,—I ffind by your letter that you could not bye me any Fringed Gloves, untill you knew what is generally worne in the university by reason of the Death of our most excellent King Charles the Second. I cannot ffully certifie as yet in this matter, But there are two or three ffellow Commoners of our House of wch. Mr. Palmer is one, that have bought their Black Cloathes, and Plain Muzeline Bands, and Cloath Shooes, and are now

in very strict morning: and others are Preparing for it, so that within this weeke I suppose the greater Part, if not all, of the university will be in morning.'

'Child,—Last Tusday night about 11 or 12 a Clock, yrs. of the 16th came to my Hands. I Have now sent you a new black Beaver with a Rubber and yr Handkercher in the Crowne of it, all within a pastboard Hatcase: I Have Bought you a new Sylver seale, but it is not yet Engraved wth yr Coate, so I could not send it you this Bout, but it is a Doing, you suppose That within a weeke, the Greater part of the University if not all, wil be in mourning: But I Ghuesse you are in a mistake, for I met with Dr. Say the Provost of Oriall, and askt Him about it, and Hee answered mee that There would Bee noe such thing as to the Generallity, Here & There some particular Persons might goe into mourning, and That would Bee all; for one swallow or two or 3 makes no Summer. Since I writt This, yr sylver Seale is Come soe I Have put it within yr Handkercher tyed up in great Hast.' Feb. 19, 1685

The boy writes later that mourning is worn only by families connected with the Court.

'Child,—I Heare my Cosen Denton Nicholas is come to Towne: Home to his ffather and Mother. You say Hee Hath bespoke a new Table and Cane chayres, wch. will amount to 3£ a peece between you, But I Do not understand why you should Bee at that unnecessary Charge, as long as you Have June, 1685

that wch. will serve yr turne, neither Do I like the Vanity. You do not tell me whether you are matriculated yet or noe, and I am impatient till I know Thats done. You say you want money, wch. I will supply you with very shortly, but not to Lay out in Vaine moveables, and so God Blesse you.'

'Why, what's a moveable?' we are tempted to ask with Petruchio. 'A joint stool,' Kate replies; Denton Nicholas and his cousin were intent upon a little more comfort than this, though they were far from having 'three elegant & well-furnished rooms' such as Gibbon occupied at Magdalen seventy years later.

Edmund had come to Oxford in stirring times; Town and Gown were alike excited about Monmouth's rebellion; the Lord Lieutenant and other gentlemen of the county were calling out the trained bands, and we hear of the Dean of Christ Church haranguing the students and using all endeavours to make them fight for the Crown. A bill of Mun's, 'for ye mending of my Sword,' suggests the exercises most in favour with undergraduates; small bodies of volunteers are enrolled at each college, and an enthusiastic lad at St. Mary's Hall pays three pence for Monmouth's speech.[1] It was a disappointment to many ardent spirits that the fighting was so soon over without giving them the chance of striking a blow for the King; the men consoled themselves with

[1] *Account Book of an Oxford Undergraduate*, ed. by E. J. Duff.

bonfires in the quads, a review on Port Meadow, and uproarious drinking of toasts. That hot summer was a sickly time in Oxford, and Mun was ill with a feverish rash very prevalent there.

In July he wants 'money To Pay for my Battles for Last quarter, which Comes To £06–00–09 and to pay my Tutor's Quarterage, and some other odd Businesses.'

The tutor who had so much alarmed young Penton, laid down the law 'that he write no letter to come home for the first whole year.' He considered it to be 'a common and a very great inconvenience, that soon after a young gentleman is settled, and but beginning to begin to study, we have a tedious ill spell'd letter from a dear sister, who languishes and longs to see him . . . this softens the lazy youth into a fond desire of seeing them too. Then all on the sudden up posts the livery-man and the led horse, enquires for the college where the young squire lives, finds my young master with his boots and spurs on beforehand, quarrelling the poor man for not coming sooner. The next news of him is at home; within a day or two he is invited to a hunting match, and the sickly youth, who was scarce able to rise to prayers, can now rise at four of the clock to a fox-chase; then must he be treated at an ale-house with a rump of beef seven miles from home, hear an uncle, cousin, or neighbour rant and swear; and after such a sort of education for six or eight weeks, full of tears and melancholy, the sad soul returns to

Oxford; his brains have been so shogged, he cannot think in a fortnight; and after all this, if the young man prove debauch'd, the University must be blam'd.'

Either Mr. Sykes was more lenient, or Claydon was too near Oxford for 'the dear sister' to be easily suppressed. Mun goes home, but the vacation is not apparently to last much more than a fortnight.

Sept 16, 1685

'Child,—I Have now sent my Man Nedd for you, Dont you make Him stay to long: I would Have ffetcht you my selfe, But that I am Hindered By an Erysipulus, wch. Troubles me so, that I cannot Ride so farr, at present. . . . I make Account you shall Returne to Oxford Time enough to Bee There against ye Terme, wch. I suppose is a little after Michaelmasse for you shall never miss a Terme while you stay in Oxon if I can Helpe it, Therefore Bee sure you Bring mee word Exactly, when the Terme Begins There.'

Mun found the serenity of the domestic circle at East Claydon somewhat disturbed. His brother Ralph was desirous to marry 'so he might be free like other men,' and had asked his great-aunt, Lady Gardiner, to introduce him to some of her friends. She entered into his wishes with hearty goodwill, and felt no difficulty about arranging a match for him, if his father would give him an allowance. Edmund, beset with debts and difficulties of all kinds, tortured by the caustic applied to his leg, and with all the complications which his wife's madness entailed, looked forward to clearing off his obligations when he

should inherit Claydon, and thought not unnaturally that a boy of nineteen might wait a few years.

Sir Ralph, though fond of his namesake, and deeply interested in the question of his making a suitable marriage, considered that his son had a sufficient income to do his share, and did not offer to make any provision for young Ralph. Lady Gardiner complained bitterly that the father would 'part from nothing that can give Incouragement to trit with persons of quollyty,' but to keep her promise to the lad, she writes to his grandfather about a little heiress 'which I fancy you may make yr one terms with—shee is about 19 or 20 years of age, full out as hansome as my cossin Denton's wife of Hilsdon & as gentill, & of a much better birth, inclinable to bee fat, sings pretyly. Her father will give her 3000 in present, & settell on her as much land as cost him 4000$^{£}$ w^{ch} he has improved & is very improvable, & a prety house on it. This after his death w^{ch} is 67 years of age & tis said he has 3000 more in mony w^{ch} he reserves to himselfe. Hee has a second wife an old woman as is very cross, shee is 72 years of age, something he is to leve her for life in mony I am told. Hee was a York sher gentelman, his name is Key a youngare brother. . . . I saw the young lady, w^{ch} is hansome enough to be wife to any man. Mr Key desires to match her as neer him as he can, he lives within five miles of Mr Cary—A man as you can order as you will. If this suts not with your mind then pray

conseal her, I only offer to yr own choyce, desiring to get a wife for the young man to yr minds, & consider ther is no treting with great persons for him, but I dare say this may be had. Littell things will serve her being low bred, I fancy they will lip [leap] at it, & in the end twill be good.'

Fresh difficulties seem to have arisen, and Aunt Gardiner can only beg Sir Ralph to do all in his power 'to lesson the misfortune of your young son, who I feare must not marry, nether to high nor low, young nor old, rich nor poore, I hope you did not mention mee: w^{ch} I ometed to desiare you not to due; I know the fortune is not great, and I trost in God my nevegh Ralphs estate will be keept from him many yeares by you and his father; I could fill twic this paper with arguments on the sons side, but am unwilling, sinc they must reflect on him I love better than his son, so will be silent only beg of you to find out A match for him; and press it so hard as not to be denyed; Least you spedyly see some misfortune befall the young man when tis too Late to help it. I know should your son know I pres this so much, hee would never forgive mee bot you are so wise as not to widen any brech betwen us.'

Edmund was an autocrat with his sons, as his father had been before him. 'I heare you hate learning & your mind hankers after travelling,' he wrote to Ralph when the boy had previously wished to have a voice in his own plans; 'I will not bee taught by my Cradle how to Breede it up 'tis Insolence & Impudence in any Child to presume so much as to offer

it.' No doubt Ralph poured out his grievances to his brother, but their father was too good-natured a man for the boys to be long *en froid* with him.

John Verney with his wife and children were at Claydon, and paid the lads a visit at Oxford after their return, which Ralph Palmer acknowledges in a grateful letter to his sister. Edmund desires to spend Christmas in town with his grandfather, father, and brother.

'With All my Heart,' Edmund senior replies, 'for you shalbee most welcome to mee. Bring along wth you (I do not meane in the Coach But) By the Carryer yr Best Waring Things, To make as good an appearance Here as you can. You shall Lye in my Chamber.' Nov 24, 1685

Young Edmund is back again at Trinity College in the beginning of January 1686.

'I have payd all my debts besides my Booksellers, to whom I owed $2^{£}$ 9^{s} 6^{d}, and out of the whole $18^{£}$ 4^{s} 6^{d}, their is but $2^{£}$ 1^{s} 0^{d} remaining, Therefore before I Can Pay my Bookseller, I must heare from you again.'

When the father replied, he was in great anxiety, owing to the sudden illness of his eldest son Ralph, who was with him in town.

'Child,—I would Have answered yr ffirst Letter sooner, But that yr Brother ffell sick last Tusday and continues very ill still of this Towne ffeavor, I am glad you are out of it, my uncle Dr. Denton is his Physitian, and Mr. St Amand is his Apothecary. He Remembers his Love to you ; . . . I would Have Feb. 6, 1686

you Pay yr Bookseller, and gett Him to Abate what you Can, And then all you owe in Oxford is Payd and Cleered. . . . I Am soe perplexed about yr Brother, that I can write no more.'

Feb. 11, 1686 'My dearly beloved son Ralph departed this transitory Life yesterday morning about 11 a Clock . . . . my Heart is so incurably pierced with grief for the loss of my dear child that I can no more be comforted then Rachel was who wept for her children . . . . My poor son is this day to be put up into 3 coffins, 2 of wood & 1 of lead & is to be drawn to his dormitory in my father's vault in Middle Claydon, I shall not stir out of doors till he is gone. He is to be drawn in a Herse with 6 Horses & scutcheons & one Coach more with 6 Horses accompanies him, my brother & Jack Stewkeley goe down in it as chief Mourners, & 4 men in mourning ride by on horseback along with the body all the way.' Edmund was too ill himself to go down to Claydon for the funeral.

Feb. 16, 1686 'Child,—You and yr sister are now my only Relicts of my Deare Wife yr Mother . . . . My Deare Sonne Ralph yr Brother . . . . Lived Virtuously and Dyed Penitently: soe I Do Verily Believe That He is a glorious Saint in Heaven. Now upon this sadd Occasion, I who Am yr true Loving ffather Do Take upon mee to Advise, Councell, and exhort you, to Bee wholly Ruled and Guided By me, and to Bee perfectly obedient to mee in all Things, according to yr Bounden Deuty, and Likewise to Behave yr selfe alwayes Respectfully towards mee

and towards yr Mother, and to Honor us, That thy Dayes may Bee Long in the Land, wch the Lord thy God Giveth Thee: ffor should you Doe otherwise and contrary in ye Least, unto this my Advice, Injunction, and Exhortation to you, I am affrayed That you wilbee in that evill circumstance Snatcht away By Death in your youth, as yr poore Brother was last weeke: Therefore O Thou my Sonne and Name Sake, Hearken unto my Voyce, who Doe Give Thee my Blessing: and who Am

'Thy most affectionate ffather and Best ffriend

'Edmund Verney.

'I have Drawne affresh Bill Here enclosed upon Alderman Towneshend for £5, to Buy you a black Cloth sute. And I Have a new black Beavor Hatt for you, wch. I will send you next Thursday in a little deale Box, with a black Crape Hatband, Black mourning Gloves, and Stockings and shoe Buckles, and 3 Payres of black Buttons for wrist and neck: And I Have also sent you a new ffrench cordebeck Hatt to save yr Beavor, the Box is to Keepe yr Beavor in: no Body useth Hatcases now.'

'Most Honoured Father,—I Received Both yrs. that of the 16th and that of 18th, and by the former I understand, that it was the pleasure of Almighty God to take unto himselfe the soule of my dearest and only Brother, But I hope the Thoughts of the happyness, which he enjoyes in Heaven, will in a great measure lessen the sorrow, which I undergo by loosing so near and so dear a Relation. Feb. 23, 1686

'Now seeing it has pleased Almighty God to make me acquainted with the sorrows and Afflictions of this world, by taking from me my only Brother, I hope it will be a means to make me fear God, and Honour you and my Mother, and by so doing I hope I shall render both you and my selfe Happy.

'I Have made me a new Black cloth suit, and a new black morning Gown, which with new muzeline Bands and Cloth shooes will stand me in very near ten pounds. . . .

'I present my Duty to you and my Grandfather and my love to my Dear Sister, and so I subscribe myselfe Yr most dutyfull Sonn 'EDMUND VERNEY.'

The next letter is from Ralph Palmer to Mrs. John Verney about his own private sorrows.

Mar. 6, 1686

'Dear Sister,—I hope all yours are well and free from losses, which I am not, for my horse is dead. Ye circumstances you will hear from my Father soe that my saddle is useless. Mr. Mun Bears ye loss of his Brother, better than I do ye death of my horse. I have nothing more but to beg yr acceptance of this scrible from your most Affectionate but unlucky Brother.'

Palme Sunday, Mar. 23, 1686

'Child,'—Edmund writes from East Claydon, 'I made account to Bee with you before now, But my ffirst weeke in ye Country was Taken up at Alesbury Assizes, and the 2nd Resting myselfe at Home and now in the Third, I have a cold and a sore Throat, so that I Dare not Venture soe ffarr yet, Being the

weather is so very Cold wett and Boysterous. Therefore I Have sent my Man Nedd with this Letter, and five pounds for you to Pay off yr scores . . . . When the Weather comes in warmer, I will goe over to Oxford: In the meane while if you Have a great Desire to Bee Here this Easter, and that yr Tutor Mr. Sykes approve of it, not Elce, and That other Gentlemen Go see their ffriends generally about this Time, and that it is not Terme Time wth you, Then if you write mee word of yr Desire, I will send for you next Wednesday, and so you may Prepare yr selfe accordingly; But the Truth is our Parts are Crazy Here at present, wch makes mee something unwilling to Have you Come, ffor ffeare you should Catch Harme By yr Comming.

'I have sent a lb of Chocolate to my Cosen Denton Nicholas, wch came from his mother for Him, And so my service to Him and to Mr. Palmer.'

Edmund being now heir to Claydon, and to his mother's property, became more than ever an object of solicitude to his father and grandfather. The children inherited a delicate constitution from their mother; and any ailment or tendency to low spirits naturally caused their father the gravest anxiety: no expense was to be spared when Edmund's health was concerned, but he was not to incur any unnecessary outlay in dress or in the furnishing of his rooms.

'Child,—There Bee many scurvy ffeavers Here in Towne, So that I Do not Hold it fitt that you should

London, May 15, 1686

Bee Here at this ffeaverish hott Time of ye yeare by noe meanes. My Cosen Nicholas Comming to this Towne is no Rule to mee, for Hee is Both Pox and ffeaver Proofe wch you are not. Pray Lett me Desire you not to goe into the water till I give you Leave, for ffeare of catching Harme. Present my service to Sr. William Dormer, And as to yr Versifying Dialogue with Him, I Like it very well, if you make it yr selves not elce, But as to That wee shall Talke more of, I Hope, if I live to meete you. You Hadd Best Bee very wary of all yr words and Actions: It is sayd Here you are Growne very melancholy, when I was Told it, I made Them a smart answer on yr Behalfe: So that if you Bee serious, sober and Discreet, Thats Interpreted melancholy to yr disadvantage, But should you Bee indeed to Blame in any Thing, then yr Back ffriends would sett you out to some Purpose, Therefore Cave mi ffiili, Dimidium verbi Sapienti Sat Est et Spero Te Talem Esse et futurum Vale.'

To the charge of being melancholy the lad replies, 'I was never inclined that way in my life any further than to be somewhat concerned at my own misfortunes, and besides you may assure yr selfe, that my tutor or the president Doctor Bathurst, if there Hadd been any such thing in the least, would have been so Just Both to you and me as to have presently informed you of it.'

His friend, Sir William Dormer, of Lee Grange, Bucks, had just been admitted to Trinity in the

April of this year, 1686, aged 16, and he and Edmund were ambitious of distinguishing themselves at what we should now call Commemoration.

'Most Honoured Father,—I hope when my Grandfather is perfectly recovered, you will consider of chiefest Business now in hand, and that is my speaking Verses in the Theatre next Act: which as we here esteem it, is one of the noblest and most Honourable things a gentleman can doe, while he stayes in the university. Therefore seeing the time now drawes near, I desire you would Bye me a good new periwigg, and send me as much as will bye a new Sute of Black Clothes, and the rest of the charges and fees will not amount to above ten pounds at most.' June 6, 1686

'Child,—I would have answered yours with my own hand, but that it shakes much by Reason of sickness that seized upon me last weeke. I refused to be lett Blood because its observed that those that are lett Blood here of pestilentiall Fevers, seldom or never are Knowne to escape. My Cousin Alexander Denton the Lawyer dyed here last weeke of this Feaver, having beene lett Blood to a considerable quantity, and was gone in 3 dayes. June 15, 1686

'Pray be carefull of your selfe for fevers are very frequent and Dangerous, but when they doe happen the spirits must be kept up with Cordialls, I do not mean Strong waters, And I hear Oxford is sickly And therefore you should have sent more word of it, and that Sr. William Dormer was gone home to Lee, and was sick of a Feaver, For which Reason I cannot

believe he will be able to repeat his verses in the Theatre with you.

'As to your periwig I gave Order for one and the party forgot it, but I will be sure to buy one for you and send it downe to you in good time.

'And now I must Conclude in exceeding great payne with my leg, yr most affectionate father

'EDMUND VERNEY.

'My Deare Have a Care of yr Health I pray.'

London June 21, 1686

'Child,—I receaved yours, and have taken all the care In the miserable Condition that I am in, as I can of what you wrote to me about. I Keep my bed, and am in continuall pain with my Legg. I am under one Mr. Hobbs a Chirurgeons hands soe that Doctors, Apothecaryes and Surgeons are my chief in converse. Your Grandfather went home last Thursday finely recovered, God be thanked.

'I have appointed Nedd to goe to Oxford and carry you Money, Stockings and Handkerchiefs. A Periwigg I will certainly send you, I hear 'tis allmost made. I am not in a Condition to buy anything else here or mind anything. My Cousin Nicholas had a letter from her son, he told her the Small Pox was very reef in Oxford, and particularly in your Colledge, of which I wonder that you take noe notice. If this be soe I would have you leave Oxford and goe keep your Grandfather Company at Midd: Claydon, as soon as I heare from you on this Subject, I'le order Horses to fetch you away. I would have you preferr your wellfare and health before the honour of speak-

ing in the Theatre, and soe God bless you and be carefull of your self. Pray give a true account of this business.'

The next letter was written in bed with evident pain and difficulty, Edmund having no one in his suffering and loneliness but 'the Cooke-maid Dorothy' who had 'just now come' from East Claydon to nurse him.

'Child,—I pray when you speak in the Theatre doe not speak like a mouse in a chees for that will be a great shame instead of an honour, but speak out your words boldly and distinctly and with a grave confidence, and be sure to articulate your words out of yr mouth soe that every body may heare them playnly.' June 24, 1686

'Child,—I heard that the players are gon down to Oxford, but I am unwilling that you should go to see them act, for fear on your coming out of the hot play house into the cold ayer, you should catch harm, for as I did once coming out of the Theatre at a publick Act when it was very full and stiaminghot, and walkin a Broad in the cold, and gave me sutch a cold that it had Likt to a cost me my Life. Your best way in Sutch a cold is to go hom to your one Chamber directly from the play house, and drink a glass of Sack, therefour Be sure you send your Servant At your hand for a bottle of the Best Canary and Keep it in your chamber for that purpose. Be sure you drink no Kooleing tankord nor no Cooling drinks what so ever . . . harkon Thou unto the July 6, 1686

voyce & Advise of mee Thy ffather, Loving Thee Better then him selfe,

'EDMUND VERNEY'

It is hard to imagine undergraduate Oxford without cricket or boating, but this allusion to the players is one of the few references to amusements that we have in the corrrespondence. In Wilding's account-book are the entries 'Michaelmas Term, spent in coursing 1*s.* 8*d*, and in the Winter Term At ye Musick night 2*s.* 6*d.*;' it was also open to the curious in 1686, to pay 2*d.* 'For seing ye Rhinoceros;' as Wilding did, and to view 'the rarities in the Physick School, the skin of a jackall, a rarely coloured jacatoo or prodigious large parrot and 2 humming birds, not much bigger than our humble bee.'

There was 'swimming in Merton Pool & Scholars' Pool, some tumbling in the hay, leaping, wrestling, playing at quoits and fishing.' Laud had put an end to the popular exercise at Oxford of learning 'to ride the great horse,' as he found in the riding school 'where one scholar learns, 20 or 40 look on & there lose their time,' so that the place was fuller of scholars than either schools or library; nor would he 'suffer scholars to fall into the old humour of going up & down in boots & spurs with the ready excuse that they were going to the riding house.' But neither Archbishop nor Puritan reformer could keep English lads and their horses long apart, and many a 'fine padd' was kept 'for health's sake' at

one of the 370 Oxford ale-houses; and the more zealous tutors complained of the time spent by the scholar, who must needs go once every day to see that his horse eats his oats, and 'the horse growing resty if he be not used often, he must have leave to ride to Abingdon once every week, to look out of the tavern window & see the maids sell turnips.' The same authorities viewed with displeasure the bowling-green and the racket-court, as they were public places resorted to by 'promiscuous company,' and such violent games tended, it was said, 'to fire the blood by a fever.'

The Verneys, who were not much of theatre-goers, had always taken dancing seriously, as part of the training of a gentleman. Sir Roger once entreated Sir Ralph's good counsel for his son Jack, lest in following this art he should 'make choice of some pedantic master, which will doe him more hurt than good, most of the dancing-masters teach them such affected gates and carriage as is conceited and ridiculous. Advise him to the Best, though he payes 3 times as much for it.' 'The best' were indeed so well-paid at Oxford that 'an honest tutor sold his hours cheaper than the fencer or dancing-master,' and it was a common complaint of sober people that 'Taylors, Dancing-Masters & such trifling fellows arrive to that Riches & pride as to ride in their Coaches, keep their Summer Houses & to be served in Plate, etc. etc. an insolence insupportable in other well-governed Nations.' There were dancing

and vaulting schools at Oxford, but fencing was probably the form of exercise viewed with least disfavour by the learned, and Mun pursued it with ardour. His hopes of distinction as a reciter were doomed to disappointment.

July 23, 1686

'Most Honoured Father,—Our Act was put off this year by reason of the Death of the Bishop [Fell], which hindered us of speaking verses in the Theatre, But the Priveleages and charges are the same now as if we had spoke our verses, Though I think we have quite lost the Honour of it.

'I have bought me a new sute of mourning and by reason of the excessive heat of the summer I was forced to Buy a new crape gown, which will stand me in £02 10s 00d, but I have not yet payed for my gown. I want new shirts very much.'

London, Sept. 14, 1686

'Child,—I Received a Letter lately from Mr. Sykes yr Tutor, unto whom you are very much obliged. Take my word for it, Albeit Hee makes a complaint of you, for not frequenting a certain afternoone Lecture as you were wont to Doe, yet otherwise Hee Speakes very Hansomly of you, wch Rejoyces my Heart, ffor I Take Him to Bee a plaine Dealer, and an Honest Gentleman, and I Hope you will Deserve those many good commendations Hee Hath Given me of you.

'It seems you Tell Him, That you Have particular Reasons, That you cannot Discover, why you come not to those Lectures. This may possibly Bee, as to Him and others, But as to mee who am yr

ffather, There can Bee None, Therefore Pray Lett me Know By the next Post, those particular Reasons, And if I Like Them, I will Doe what I can with civility to Gett you excused: For Looke you Child, any one may Pretend particular Reasons, which one cannot discover, for not Doing what one ought to Do, or for Doing what one ought not to Doe: But That Shamme will not Passe among Wise Men: ffor such Pretences to Avoyd ones Deuty, are allwayes (wth Justice) Interpreted in ill sence, and I should Bee very sorry any such Reflections should ffall upon you: you are under Government, as all subjects are in severall Kinds, and therefore are Bound By Laws and Rules and Precepts Divine to obey: Besides it is a wrong to the Society not to Come to Lectures, ffor if all others should fforbeare Comming to them as you Doe, the Lectures must ffall, wch are a support to a College, and so By Degrees Arts and Sciences, and Learned Societies must Dwindle away and Dissolve to nothing: But I Hope none of my Posterity will ever Bee the primum mobile of such a mischief to Learning: And so I shall close up my Discourse about this Businesse for this time and Longing for yr Answer about it.'

Meanwhile young Edmund had got into a more serious scrape at Oxford, and was in danger of being sent down, but the following letter from his tutor was accidentally delayed, and before it reached his father at East Claydon, the undergraduates were all scattered by an alarming outbreak of smallpox.

Oct. 1, 1686

'*To the much Honoured Edmund Verney Esqre at Claydon in Bucks.*

'Sir,—Since my last there are arisen new troubles, not about the Lecture mentioned in my former Letter, for I suppose that is at an end according to your Letter to me, But about other matters.

'It so happened that Mr. Verney Lay out of the College on Wednesday night Last with another or two of our College, and that with some other Provocations hath occasioned Mr. Vicepresident to Cross his name with the others. I suppose he will give you an Account where he was, he is unwilling to do it here, and that makes the business So much the worse. I suppose he will scarce ask for his name againe, and I presume the Vicepresident will not give it him of his owne accord, and so what will be the issue of it I Know not. He speaks of removing of himself to some other College, but I much question whether that will be for his advantage or not. If he is unwilling to stay here perhaps Sir its better to remove him from the university but I leave it to you Sir to judg what is best to be done; I canot help this and I hope he will not deny but that I have behaved myself to him in all things as a tutor ought to do, and been civil to him as far as I could, but as to this business I can only be sorry for this, but canot remedy it. It is directly against both the discipline of our College and ye University in General to Ly out a nights, And I finde I canot prevail

with the Vicepresident to take off the Cross unless your Sonn will acknowledg his fault and promise not to be faulty any more in that Kinde.

'I humbly beg pardon for this trouble and give you my most hearty thankes for all your kindness to Hon^ed^ Sir, your most humble and obliged Servant

'Tho: Sykes.'

Mun goes down with the rest of the undergraduates. 'Deare Brother,' Edmund writes to John: 'My sonne & I, & Grosvenor, & M^r^ Butterfield and Dover, Have all Read yr Booke of the Seige of Buda, soe I Have sent it Back to you, w^th^ my Thankes, and a Cheese, w^ch^ I Hope will prove Good, if a Mouse's judgement may Bee Credited, you will find it soe. I Heare the small Pox Rages mightily in Trinity College in Oxon, as the Great one doth in London, so that Eight went out lately sick of them from that College, wch makes me afrayed to send my sonne Thither till albee well again. Sir William Dormer is kept still at Lee upon the same account.' Two more fellow commoners of Trinity, 'Mr. Chambers and one Mr. Knopher,' have fallen sick. Nov. 8, 1686

The small-pox had done young Mun at any rate a good turn; his indiscretions were forgotten, while the authorities were gathering together their scattered and diminished flocks, and he never got into trouble again.

'Sir,' writes Dr. Sykes to Edmund Verney, 'The small pox were in Oxford before your Sonn Left this place, and since that time we have had Several Sick Dec. 16, 1686

of that disease, but at present we are all well in our College, but there are some still sick of other Colleges: Since the begining of May last we have had (if I reckon right) sixteen or seventeen that have had this distemper in our College, and every one of them did well, and very few have miscarryd in the whole University, but however there is a danger in the Disease, and its very chargable being sick here, and that was the reason why I have not desird your Sonn's Company sooner. I hope the disease is now going off, at leastwise that it will be in a manner quite gon by that time Christmas is over, and then you shall againe heare from me. In the meane I wish you a merry Chrismas and a good journey to London whensoever you goe: And the Sooner your Sonn Returnes to me the more welcome he will be to

'S^ir^ Your most humble and obliged Servant

'THO: SYKES.'

Feb. 17, 1687

'Sir,' replies Edmund from London, 'I Thank you for yr Last: I was very gladd to Reade that Oxford is so well cleared of the Small Pox, So now God willing my Sonne shall Returne to you next weeke. In the meantime I must Tell you that about 3 weekes or a month agoe, yours of the first of October last, came to my Hands by an unexpected Accident. I was surprised at it, and that I Had it not before: But Being through Length of Time Growne obsolete, my only answer to That shalbee my Reiterated Thankes to you for it, and so Am

willing to Passe By all Things amisse in my sonne with the last yeare past, in Hopes that all wilbe well this new yeare for the Time to Come: I Have Discoursed some Part of these matters with Him: But I will say no more to you now but that I am Sr. yr obliged friend and humble Serv^{t}.'

The extravagant joy felt at the Restoration had nowhere been more loudly expressed than in loyal Oxford; discipline for some years was very lax, as Aunt Isham complained when her son was at Merton.

'I heare as Tome will drinke more then his share . . . . he hath an ingenus tuter & if I give him an hinte of itt he will brake him of itt, but that Colige he was put in for beinge one of the sivelest itt is far from that, for all hours of the nite one maye goe out as Tome did tell me, for the felowes be out so much a nites as the gates be most an end open.' Oct. 16, 1686

'They were not only like them that dream,' writes an Oxford man, 'but like them who are out of their wits, mad, stark, staring mad. To study was fanaticism, to be moderate was downright rebellion, and thus it continued for a twelvemonth; and thus it would have continued if it had not pleased God to raise up some Vice-Chancellours who stemmed the torrent, and in defiance of the loyal zeal of the learned, the drunken zeal of dunces, and the great amazement of young gentlemen who really knew not what they would have, but yet made the greatest noise, reduced the University to that temperament that a man might study and not be thought a dullard,

might be sober and yet a conformist, a scholar and yet a Church of Englandman.'

Edmund Verney had gone up while the zeal which had carried these reforms was not yet spent. The strictness of the college discipline in his time is in striking contrast to the experience of an undergraduate in the next century when authority was nodding again. Edmund Verney could not sleep out one night without incurring the risk of being sent down. Edward Gibbon relates his 'notorious absences.' 'A tour in Buckinghamshire, an excursion to Bath, 4 excursions to London, were costly and dangerous follies, and my childish years might have justified a more than ordinary restraint. Yet I eloped from Oxford, I returned, I again eloped in a few days, as if I had been an independent stranger in a hired lodging, never once hearing the voice of admonition, or once feeling the hand of controul.'[1]

In Edmund's carefully kept accounts, very little is spent for wine, the heaviest charge is for '3 Quart Bottles of Sack, 2 of White Wine & 4 of Claret,' amounting to 12*s.*; there are frequently small entries for 'Oranges, Apples, Sugar Plums & Spice, for Tuk 1*s.*, for Oysters 1*s.* 6*d.*, for De Vries' Logic 2*s.*, for wood as billet & faggots 14*s.* 6*d.*' In the quarter ending Lady Day 1688, while he pays only 3*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* to his tutor and 9*s.* 3*d.* to his bookseller, 'a long wigg' costs him 2*l.* 5*s.*

He is settled again at Trinity College, and his

[1] *Autobiographies of Ed. Gibbon.* Murray, 1896, p. 227.

father resumes the correspondence; he has desired Alderman Townshend to pay Mun six guineas in gold and ten pounds in silver, and in the breeches, packed with his new clothes, 'within one of the little Pockets buttoned' he is to find '3 Guinnys done up in Paper.' 'I durst send you no Lemons nor oranges for feare of stayning your Clothes. I hope you tooke care to have your Bedd well ayred & warmed.'

'Child, I am very Gladd to see that you Got safe and well to Oxford and That you Have yr Name againe given you By Mr. President and That he was so Civill to you, and That you stand Rectus in Curia quo ad Collegium Tuum again: Pray Have a Care of a Relapse, Least it prove a worse Disgrace to you (to say no more) then it was at first; And never Keepe such Damed Company for the Time to Come, whose evil communications (tho' witty) corrupt good manners, and strike at ffundamental obedience as Honesty, and Religion, and in Lieu of them Plant in Mens Hearts and minds Hyppocrisie, and Knavery, and Impiety. And so make People grow only ffitt for Hell and the Devill: And Pray no more journeys nor Lying out of yr College without yr Tutor's Leave or myne: my sonne mark well my words who am thy ffather, And Lett Them Take Deepe Roote in Thee, and Thou shalt find Benefit By observing Them.' Mar. 1, 1687

The next letter might have been written by Sir Ralph to Edmund senior, so much does it recall the latter's boyish carelessness and his father's precision.

Mar. 4, 1687 'Child, I Received yrs of ye 1st. wth an Enclosed wch you say my Cosen Towneshend Gave you, and it expresses to Pay Sixteene Pounds Nine shillings unto Mr. Thomas Gett in Woodstreet for the use of One Mrs. Mary Longford: But to this Note my Cosen's Name was not put, Neither Hadd you Received the money: So I was vexed to see you soe simple as to send me such a strange Note unsigned before you Hadd the money: and yet I went yesterday and Payd ye sixteene pounds nine shillings my selfe unto Mr. Gett According to that order, Tho He Hadd no advice of it: so I Keepe his acquittance for my owne security, till I Heare you Have ye money: But if ever you are soe ffoolish again to send me such an imperfect Note for money without the Name Signed By Him that Doth appoint the Payment, or That you Have not ye money ffirst before you send yr Bill of exchange, in These two Cases I Tell you positively, I will not Pay any more money for the Time to Come, till I know that you Have the money ffirst, and the Name of the Returner Bee put to the Note or Bill.'

Mar. 10, 1688 'Child . . . I saw Thom: Smith Here last night as plaine as a Pike staff in Cloaths, but They Looked very Gentile upon Him, Being cleane & Neate.

'Why Did you not write me word that your Chumme was made Master of Arts?'

April 6, 1687 To Dr. Thomas Sykes he writes: 'This day about noone yr Messenger Brought me the ill newse of my Sonnes unlucky accident last Munday. I am

very sorry for it: But am extremely joyfull to understand by you that the worst is past with this and that He is in so fayre a way of amendment soe I Hope There is noe Danger in a dislocation of an Elbow, where such excellent Chirurgions and Bone setters are at Hand, and Physitians if occasion Be: I Ghuesse This was done a wrestling and the Place was very ill chosen for such an exercise: But since it is Done, all the Helpe for Him and care of Him must Be Hadd as can possibly Bee. And so I Hope it wilbee a warning to Him to Be more carefull of Himselfe Hereafter.

'I am infinitely obliged to you for yr great care of Him and the Advice you gave me of his ill accident and his present condition, and Returne you Millies Millena Millia of Thankes for it: if I finde myselfe any wayes able, & that the weather Be ffayre, I wilbe wth Him tomorrow, However I will send to Him in case I cannot come, and in the meane while I now send Him my Blessing and Heartily pray for his Speedy Recovery and Happinesse, wch I desire you to Tell Him from me.'

'Child,—Nedd Brought me last ffryday yrs of the 22nd And last Night late I Received yrs of the same date wch came by the Post: But send to me no more that way for it is the worst way, and almost as Deare as if you Hyred a foote messenger on purpose. April 29, 1687

'There is a Bisseter Carryer Called my Lord Ellis who comes and goes 4 times a weeke betweene

Oxford and Bisseter, so when you write to me you may direct yr Letters to me To Be Left with Mr. John Burghnesse a mercer at Bisseter, who will give it to one Mr. Wawy who Keepes Winslow Market, and so I may get a Letter from you any Thursday.

'I Believe it is Good to exercise yr arme moderately, that the sinues may Be stretcht by Degrees unto their pristine Length, But you must Be vastly Carefull in the Doing it, Least yr Elbo slippe out again, and then it wilbe exceeding Difficult ever to make it stay in the right Place: are you sure it is right sett, for my Man Tells me that you can Hardly Bring it to yr mouth so that if it should Be wrong set, the Chirurgion wilbe apt to Lay the ffault upon the shrinking of the sinues, and throw it off of Himselfe, for tho' without all Doubt Mr. Poniter is an excellent Chirurgion and I Believe a very carefull Honest man, yet I know not whether He Be so good a Bone Setter, tho' He may Bee Both.'

In May Edmund sends 'his Bay Pacer because he is a very easy goer,' with two servants on horseback to fetch his son home, being still anxious about his arm. He is to bring his new gloves and to ride carefully.

The Oxford surgeon is to have three guineas for his attendance; he came to Mun every day for about a fortnight, 'and applyed several Poultesses and Oyntments to the elbow.'

His tutor writes to Edmund:

May 14, 1687 'Sr,—I send this with your Sonn to give you

thankes for all Kindnesses which I have Received of you and acquaint you with his condition. His arme is free from paine, but he hath not yet the right use of it, And upon that Account as soon as I was fearfull that all was not right, I would have had him gone home to you in order to his consulting some very skilfull Chirurgion, and particularly advised him to one Mr. Freeman who lives near Daventry in Northamptonshire, and is every market Day Here at the Wheatsheaf. This man here is look'd upon by Physitians and others as the most skilfull Bone setter in all England, And therefore I had a desire that your Sonn should have his opinion; But this I thought could not be conveniently done unless he first came to you, that he might have had the convenience of your horses, and ye attendance of one of your servants, Besides the Chirurgion here all along hath been confident in asserting that the bones are in their right place, and stands to it still, which made him less careful to consult another. His lameness or one thing other hath so troubled him since his last Returne that he hath not minded his business so well as otherwise he might have done, And when he is well he does not love to rise in a morning, and therefore looses part of the College exercise, but I hope these things will be mended if he Returne againe perfectly well; which I most heartily wish and am,

'Your most humble and obedient Servant

'Tho: Sykes.'

Edmund took Mr. Sykes' advice, and writes to John of their visit to Daventry:

May 22, 1687 'The famous Bone setter Mr. ffreeman Lookt upon the arm and ffelt it, and sayd it is right sett, and nothing out, but That the sinues are shrunk wch makes Him That Hee cannot Hold his Arme streight: But Mr. ffreeman sayes his Arme will Do well: and Be as streight as ever, if Hee Doth use it and exercise it with care: and ffollow his directions and prescriptions.

'I Lay at the Wheate Sheafe in Daventry, and met wth Dr. Skinner There, who is very well: I saw also my old ffriend Nan Birt now Arnold, and her Husband: so on the next morning I Ridd with my Sonne to Northampton to show Him that pretty Towne; where wee Dined at the George Inne: And I sent for one Mr. Dover the Town Clark and my man Dover's Brother, and one Mr. Stone a Trooper in Captain Lumley's Troope whom I Knew, to Dine with mee, and wee saw all and were very civilly merry and so wee Came Home, I Thank God very safe and well.

'The Trooper Told me that t'other Day two Troopers ffell out about a Horse shoe, and went out and ffought, and one shot the other in the Head, and Killed Him dead upon the Spott and He that Killed Him was shot in the shoulder Himselfe, But Hee Gott his wound Dressed and ffledd: There be 3 Troopes quartered in Northampton:'

'Child,—I Received yrs of ye 24th. And you can

Hardly imagine How joyfull I Am, that you are well, I need not Tell you that I wish you a long continuance of Health, when I Do Assure you that I Reckon it my Chiefest ffeelicity in this world: Therefore I Leave it to you to Come to mee when the Doctor and yr selfe Doe Think ffitt, only Bee carefull of yr selfe by the way, and Lett me Know the Day beforehand. I Have writt very Earnestly for new shirts for you, and I Do Hope to Receive some Here tomorrow by Franc Hall my Carryer, if my ffolke send none I shalbee very angry. London, May 27, 1687

'I Do Keepe my Charrett in Towne, But my Charrettier Nedd Smith is as inexpert a Driver as Phaeton was, neverthelesse I Doe venture my selfe now and then with Him.'

In the summer of '87 Edmund has a house-full of guests at East Claydon; Mun is at home and helping to entertain the good company. 'Sir Richard Temple drank here on his way to the Aylesbury sessions and his two sonnes eate a neates Toungue with me yesterday, and I Gave Them a Bottle of wine as They came from Eaton Schoole to go Home to Stow.' Lady Gardiner and her son Jack are expected, the Hillesden family come over to dinner. Edmund has ordered a new chariot from Stone, a London coach-builder. 'I find you are very Satyricall upon S^r^ ffleetwood Dormers Chariot,' he writes to John, 'I am affrayd you will Dislike myne and Think it ridiculous, for it is not very modish but I Think it is convenient, pray Tell me yr opinion

before it Be made up: I remember I saw S[r] ffleetwoods and wondered at it, and Did not Like it.'

Aug. 17, 1687 Mun asks his uncle John to buy him 'a Cravat Ribbon of any modest colour, and as much as will make a hatband of the same, all made up according to the mode' in London. The news at Claydon is that 'old Mrs. Roades of Ffynmore is dead.'

There is a constant interchange of hospitality between the two family houses, a note of Mun's to his grandfather has survived.

'Sir My ffather is under the Rasor: Therefore He has commanded me to present his humble duty to you, and to Let you Know that he will waite on you at dinner and so will also, Your most Dutyfull Grandson and humble Servant

'EDMUND VERNEY.'

He is back at Oxford for the winter term, and his father writes:

Dec. 11, 1687 'Child,—I Have not Heard from you since I saw you. And I intend for London (God Willing) some Time this weeke with yr Grandfather, I shalbe very Gladd to Heare by my man tomorrow, That you are well, and particularily yr fface and Arme, and what Physick you Have Taken Since, and How it agreed with you, Bee sure as Nothing Bee Done to Strike in that Humeor: you may write to mee a ffurther account of yr selfe, Directed unto Captain Pauldens House in Lincolnes Inne ffields at London.'

Jan. 3, 1688 'Child, I shall expect you on Satterday next and

Bidd you very welcome, in the meane while I wish you a prosperous journey.

'I was sorry for the sadd accident that Happened betweene the two Brothers Treavers, but Evill Accidents Happen Here alas, for Count la Coste a ffrench man, and Nephew to my Lord ff'ersham was Killed t'other day in St. James Square By one Mr. Grymes.

'I Have a new shirt Here Ready for you, and shall Buy Muzeline Cravats and Ruffles, against you come to me. Yr most affectionate ffather

'EDMUND VERNEY.'

'Child,—I am gladd to heare that the redness of your fface is all most vanished so as hardly to be perceived, and I hope you finde yourselfe in health other ways, and if you do, don't you give your Body to physick, for the sound need no physision and so that he that lives physically lives miserable. I would have you exercise your Body with Mr. Sionge and your minde with Mr. Sikse, and Keep good Hours and a seperat holesum diet and have a care of over heating your selfe and catching cold, then I hope you will enjoy Long health, for that is the way and so I pray God Bless you and do you Be sure to Remember thy Creator in the dayse of thy youth. . . . Feb. 1688

'My Cosen Ann Hobart's Maid Nan Rogers is to Be maried next Tursday to one Berger a french Barber, an unfortunate Protestant, to avoyd Sulla in his own country comes Heare into ours, and is Like to ffall very suddenly into Charibdis thro' so ffoolish a choise.'

'You might Have Written me newse of Magdelin College without Reflexions, and then there can come no Harme of it, for those are not state affaires.'

'Let no Body see my Letters to you.'

London, Feb. 19, 1688

'Child,—I am often askt How you do by some Persons that I Ghuesse Do not aske out of true Kindnesse, but wishing at the same time that you were otherwise, as old Th: Stephens used to aske often How his mother Didd, Hoping for her Death, and when He was Answered that his mother was well, He went away sorrowfull and sayd that They Lived Long at East-Claydon. You write with such pittifull Pale Ink that by the time your Letter Comes Hether it is scearce Legible.'

Edmund has got down to the parlour, wearing a 'slitt shoe;' Mun junior has paid 10*s.* entrance money for his fencing-lessons.

London, March 17, 1688

'Child,—I Like well what I perceive by y^{rs} of the 15th That you Learne to exercise the Pike and Musquet as well as ffence of Mons^{r} New-house, But to send you any of my Carabines from Home, I shall not, for I Am very Nice in my owne Armes, especially when I know you Have Been negligent or Heedlesse in Losing a sword Already. I Hadd rather Go to the Mineries and Buy a little Gunne with a match Lock, w^{ch} I Believe I can Have for 10 or 12 shillings, for you, I was once a Buying one of that Price for my selfe of Mr. Norman, deceased, but wee disagreed about 2 or 3 shilling so I Had it not: But I Ghuesse you may for a shilling or 18 pence Have a little

Gunne & a fflask Sent you from any Gunsmith in Oxford Good enough for to serve yr Turne for such a purpose.' Edmund had just paid 4*l.* 15*s.* for a gun for his own use.

'Tho : Gardiner was Here this morning, He Hath Been the Circuit as ffar as Bedford and Huntington & was Retained in Several causes, w^{ch} was very much to his Credit, being the first Circuit that Ever Hee went: you say you care not How plaine yr Cloathes Bee provided yr Linnen and Trimming Bee good, I see you affect finery but you are under a grand mistake for the best Gentlemen and noblemen that are Belonging to the Army, Go exceeding plaine in Both cloathes and Trimming, for to go otherwise Habited is Like Bestowing nine pence in sauce to make a Dish of Meate worth Three pence: & so God in Heaven Blesse you.

'Child, I shall send you two pounds of the best Chocolate upon next Munday by the Carryer, better than any that can be had in Oxford or Cambridge. But it is Like casting Pearle afore Swine, that understand not the Value of it, as I Do that saw it made. London, March 24, 1688

'Yr Grandfather was Taken ill last Tusday, But I Thank God is finely Well Recovered, so There is a good subject for yr Pen to write a congratulous Letter thereupon.

'Why Didd you not Tell me that yr Bishop of Oxford [Fell] was Dead, such Remarquable occurrences you should Impart that Happen Neare you, or

elce writing will signify nothing more then I Am well as I Hope you are, & my scribling is Done.'

Mun writes, as his father suggests, a careful letter on large paper and with an ample margin, in which after many carefully turned phrases of inquiry after his grandfather's health he sends him the University news.

Oxford, April 1, 1688

'Most Honoured Grandfather,—Doctor Lamphier, Head of Heart Hall died last Friday, and one Mr. Thornton a fellow of Waddam Colledge has a great friend the Chancellor for the headship of the said hall. This Doctor Lamphier was likewise History Professor to the university, and now there are three Persons stand for that Place, one Doctor Alldworth lately a fellow of Magdalen Colledge, and Mr. Finch, Warden of all souls Colledge and one Mr. Dodwell a forreiner but with all a very learned man, and of an extraordinery Good Character. The Election will be made to-morrow by convocation, and it is thought Mr. Dodwell will carry it.

'I Present my humble duty to you, and my Father, and my love to my Sister; and this is All at Present ffrom me, Who am your most Dutyfull Grandson

'EDMUND VERNEY.'

London, April 7, 1688

'Child,—I Received y^{rs} of the 3^{d} And Am Gladd you Like the Chocolate & Bicinelli I sent you. I Am sure They were as good as could Bee in their Kind, the King God Blesse Him cannot ate Better.

'Yr Grandfather shewed mee the Letter you wrote to Him t'other Day to congratulate his Recovery,

w^ch I Read and Like very well, . . . my Lady Gardiner Having finisht her Affayres with Mr. Thomas Gardiner, He went yesterday to Cambridge to Reside There at his ffellowship in PeterHouse till next Terme, where He is to exercise the office of a Deane, w^ch is properly censor morum.

'You write to me to Buy you a new Sute of Cloathes against Easter w^ch I Do not Think fitt to Bee Bought so soone, because I intend only to Buy you a Campagne Sute this Summer, w^ch I would Have you Have ffresh to Appeare with me at the Camp, w^ch I Have some Thoughts of shewing you if I Live & am well and able.'

London, April 21, 1688

'Child,—I would Have you Go as soone as may Bee unto One Mr. Tho: Wrenches at Paradise Garden in Oxon, And see and examine what Right Dutch Artichoakes, True in the Kinds without Mixture, and 6*s.* 8*d.* pr Cent Hee Hath, And send mee a full account Thereof by the next Post, because your Grandfather and I Both would Have some from Thence if wee Like yr description of Them and their Prices And withall word, when the Prime Time is for to Slippe Them.

'I Bidd you Bee ffrugall, for my unfortunate Circumstances will not Allow mee to supply you at that Rate throughout, Tho' were I Able you should Have it with a greater ffranckness then yr owne Heart can Bestow upon yr selfe, and since wee must all yield to Necessity, Pray Bee a Better Husband for the time to come.'

'Send me word whether Colly flower Plants may Be Hadd at Oxford and at what Rates by the Hundred.'

Mun writes that Artichokes cost 10*s.* per hundred and that 'Collyflowers may be had of several nurserymen in Oxford from 2*s.* to 5*s.* and 6*s.*

May 5, 1688 a hundred,' but his father and Sir Ralph 'will Have no more to say to Them at those Rates, But Then,' they ask, 'why Didd Mr. Th: Wrenches sett out in the Gazette by way of advertisement that Hee would sell the right Dutch Artichoakes without mixture at a Noble, wch is 6 shill: 8 pence the Hundred?'

May 8, 1688 'Most Honoured Father,—I understand that mine of the 29th. last Post did not thoroughly satisfy you concerning my debts of the last quarter due at our Lady Day last, and particularly concerning that which I owe to the Colledge which is 09$^{£}$ 10^{s} 07^{d} because I did not particularize for what, and I Perceive you Think that this colledge debt is only for bare meate and drink together with my chamber rent which is not so, for we gentlemen do maintain all the colledge servants and serviters, and something we pay quarterly for university dues, and there are severall other expences which at present I cannot think on that are Reckoned in for Battles: But as for my Bedmaker, Landresse, and Barber, which you supposed to be appendants to the College they are not payd by the Burser but by me, so they are not Put down in the Burser's Booke amongst my Battles: neither Did I put them down in the account of my debts, because I have them allready.

'I Perceive you think my expences very great, but I am sure if you rightly understood the necessity of them you could not chuse but think them very reasonable and me very frugall. . . . I did not long since design to go through a course of Chymistry, the expences of which would amount to 3 pounds and upwards, but thinking it a charge not absolutely necessary I have desisted in my designs, and Let slipp a very Good opportunity. . . .'

Natural Science had been dabbled in by the Oxford dons for many years, but it was a new subject with the undergraduates, and the distinction between chemistry and alchemy was not clear to the mind of the country squire.

'I am gladd,' Edmund writes, 'you Didd not Goe thorough with a Course of Chymistry, That sort of Learning I Do not approve of for you, it is only usefull unto Physitians and it impoverisheth often those that study it, and Brings constantly a Trayne of Beggars Along with it. . . .' May 19, 1688

'Most Honoured Father,—I writt to you before last Easter for new Cloathes, for the truth of it is, mine do begin to be so bad, that I am almost ashamed to weare them. . . .' May 22, 1688

'Child,—I Have Bought Cloth for my selfe and for you to make new Cloathes, wch is now in the Taylours Hands to Be made up, And I Gave Him great Charge to make yr Cloathes Gentill and Modish as can Bee. Yr Cloth is something Lighter than myne. May 26, 1688

'My Cosen Nicholas Tells me that Mr. Newhouse is Turned Trooper, and that He did it for a subsistence; I am very sorry that a man of his Parts and ingenuity could not maintaine Himselfe without Turning Souldier, for tho' the Profession is Honorable, yet There is alwayes abundance of Badd Company attends it, wch makes mee not so ffond of yr continuing to Bee his Schollar as I was Before. My father's coachman Nedd, is so troubled with fflatus Hyppocondriacus that he cannot drive my father, and the dogs in our Country are much subject to Madnesse this yeare: therefore Have a care of Them, and Don't Play with Them.'

May 29, 1688 Mun wishes he had been consulted before his suit had been ordered; he believes that 'stuff will be more modish than cloth this summer, and that most people will weare it. But however seeing you have Bought cloth already I am very well contented with a cloth sute; I hope you will consider to buy me some good shirts or elce some sort of wastcoat sutable for Summer ffor it is not fashionable for any Gentleman to go Buttened up either summer or winter but especially summer. I shall likewise want new stockings and lased ruffles to weare with my new clothes.

'My Month ended yesterday with Mr. Newhouse, and I do designe to pay him the 15*s.* next time I see him: it is true that he rides in a troope, but he tells his schollars that he only rides as a reformado in hopes of getting a commission for a Cornets place,

and that the Coronel has promised to free him whensoever he pleases.'

Edmund's corpulence and his sufferings increase, he has gained 20 lbs. in weight in a few months, he is going to law with his man, Dick Lonsdale, at the Assizes, and is retaining Sir John Holt. Mun begs to be allowed to come and nurse him; he could be with him 'at one day's warning by the flying coach,' but his father, though alone in town, will not hear of his coming up to 'such a sickly place.' Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Butterfield have been to see Mun in Oxford. June 12, 1688

'Child,—I perceive you Think yr new Cloathes too warme for the Summer, But I Do not, if it Bee a ffault, I am sure it is a good one: Then you wonder why I made it a halfe mourning sute, and that you Hoped that none of our Relations are Dead: to which I answer wee Have lately Lost one of our neare Relations, my Cosen Pegg Danby, a Person of great quality, who is Dead and Buryed Here in St. Martins: And I Have made my selfe a halfe mourning Sute, And Declare I mourne for Her. My cosen Winwood is also Deade. But However halfe mourning Sutes are as much worne, and are as modish as any Thing out of mourning: I see no Body weare Rich Sutes But Souldiers, and mercantile ffellows, that covet to appeare very Brave and Gentlemen Like, when They are not soe: as for another payre of Breeches if you desire Them I shall Buy you a payre tho' it Bee Needelesse: You say you Have June 30, 1688

Been wonderfull ffrugall, if I ffind it so, I shall commend you extremely: My unhealthy condition makes me spend more then I would Do in spight of my self. . . . Next Munday I am to Bee of a Jury at the Kings Bench, in a Tryall betweene the Lord Chancellour and one Mrs. Herbert of our Country: And I will Be There if I am well: And so God Blesse you, and send us a happy meeting.'

He encloses three patterns of striped cloth, but Mun desires that 'for variety's sake his next pair of breeches be made of silke.'

'Mr. Hunt, one of the fellowes of our colledge, and a little suspected in his religion, is lately preferred to the chaplain to the tower.'

July 12, 1688

The good father, sick as he is, orders Mun a pair 'of Damask Silke Breeches, as Gentile as any Body weares Them,' and has 'them up in a little Deale Box with a payre of modish shoes Buckles.'

Mun's undergraduate friend Sir William Dormer, who was to have shared with him the honour 'of speaking verses in the Theatre,' 'is in Rebellion against his Tutor & Grandmother, And is resolved to bee Master over Himselfe, he hath taken a Ramble some say to see the Camp;' but Mun is much more dutiful and diligent. We leave him now in the careless enjoyment of his Oxford life, unconscious of the great changes which were to befall the kingdom, and of the heavy burdens to be laid on his own young shoulders before this fateful year 1688 had run its course.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REVOLUTION AND ITS PROLOGUE.

1686–1689.

'Why masters, my good friends, mine honest neighbours,
Will you undo yourselves?'
'We cannot, Sir, we are undone already.'

In the little world represented by the Verney letters there was so great a dread of civil war and so firm a determination to believe the best and to make the best of the King, that it seemed impossible for James II. to alienate the loyal hearts that surrounded him. The journal to which Mr. Butterfield confided his thoughts gives us a fair and temperate retrospect of the changes wrought in the opinions of the country clergy during the three years of James's reign.

In the Bucks elections following King Charles's death, the rector of Claydon, with all his respect and affection for Sir Ralph, bestirred himself, in strong opposition to his wishes, for the return of Judge Jeffreys' candidates. 'I entered upon the Ministerial function very young,' he says of himself, 'in the latter end of the loose Reign of K. Ch: 2nd, when Reformation was at an Ebb & Toryism & Bigotry, or the Arbitrary Power of the Prince, & the Authority

of Mother Ch: ran high. Passiev Obed: & Non Resistance, & no Salvation out of the Episcopal Comunion, were the common Topicks of the Court, & Popular Sermons; the Test of Loyalty, & good affection to the Church of England & the high Road to Perferment. I being then, as now, settled in a low Station & not affecting greater, had little occasion or concern to enquire nicely into those controversial matters which exercised these learned & dignified men; being then as now, hasty in my Judgmts, a thorough conformist. So taking things according to the ancient fame & approbation, I rather inclined to the Part of the Government than its opposers: But the latter end of K. James' Reign, when the Public Danger from Popery & arbitrary Power in the Prince began to show its effects on the Constitution, the Liberties & Properties of Particular Persons, & brought the matter home to me & every one, & the Danger grew still more palpable & imminent, I then began more seriously, & distinctly & impartially to consider the nature of Governm^{t} & the Constitution of the Church & was soon determined with the rest of the Clergy to give up Non Resistance, & resolved that no Authority is Sacred nor claims Submission but Legal; & consequently that if those in whose Hands the Legislative Power is lodged do employ it to the manifest Destruction of the Community, for whose sake & Benefit it was committed to them, they may be resisted & deposed & the sword wrested out of their Hands by the People. Upon this Principle I

resisted reading K. James's Declaration, wishd well to the Prince of Orange's Expedition, submitted to him (as the Clergy generally did) when K. J. abdicated, & he succeeded to him; & when the Convention of the States of the Kdom had invested him & his Consort Q.M. with the Regalities, I swore Allegiance to him consideratly & freely, tho' not hastily, & he having approved himself thro' the Course of his Reign a true Father of his Country, the most Legal Governor in Ch: & State as well as generous Deliverer of these Nations & of all Europe from Popery and Slavery; I payd him the most hearty Love & Obedience, as I do now the greatest veneratⁿ to his memory. Haveing discharged my mind from those slavish Principles of Governmᵗ in the State, with equal freedom I weighed the controverted Points of Religion, & came to this Resolution, that the more fundamental & essential Doctrines of Faith & good life being first secured, matters of opinion, & externals, modes & forms of Worship & Discipline are not to be impos'd or urg'd farther than is consistent with Peace & Charity.'

For such results no price might seem too high to pay; but at the period we have reached, opinions like these were still in the melting pot.

During the year 1686 indignation was strongly aroused at the religious persecutions in France. 'The Pope himself, tis said, is very Compasinat to the poor protestants beyond sea, and has rit to his Nuntia Fr. Lenenya to receve all as coms and give them protection, and will send all provisions as fast

as hee can to them, Ittyly cannot furnish them so hee will order provisions out of Millan, hee is much ther frend and tis beleved will excomunycate the King of franc if he stops not his fury.'

In March John writes:—'The brif is red in severall churches for the protistants, bot many not satisfyed through whot hands the money shall goe, till it be ordered in hands to the minds of the publick, ther will not be much given.' Later on we hear of large sums subscribed by the City, and of collections made in private houses 'to the French Protestant Breife.' 'Dr. Lower hath given £100, my Ld. of Bedford £100, & people in his house 30*s.* more; Col: Russell £10, Wiseman the Surgeon £5. Three Merchants' houses in Basinghall St. have given £100 or thereabouts, one of 'em Sir Peter Vandgrat £20 himselfe, his 4 little children each a guiny, his Lady & Servants 4 or £5 more; another was Sir Jeremy Tambrooke, the third one Col: Grey and his partner both Barbadoes merchants.' In the teeth of this feeling, the King exasperated the City by authorising the building of Roman Catholic chapels against the law, while he attacked the privileges of the City companies in other ways, for which no pleas of conscience could be advanced. King James has turned out 'many learned men of the Law,' and made 10 new Sergeants; 'it was strongly reported that Williams or North should be Attorney General, since that honorable & worthy gentleman Mr. Finch is put out, and Sir Thos. Power is to be Solicitor

Gen:' The French are threatening Lisbon and fortifying themselves in the West Indies.

Mun gives voice to the savage hatred of Louis XIV. that was growing amongst the country squires. It is startling to hear so good-natured a man rejoicing brutally over the terrible details of the King's illness; no punishment is adequate 'for his unparalelled cruelties to his Protestant subjects.' 'The French King demands money now of Portugall. He will never be done, Demanding & Claiming & Destroying, and Taking forcibly until the Devill hath him. In the Interim I heare he stincks Alive, & his Carkass will stinck worse when he is dead, & so will his memory to all eternity. I am a most grievous & wicked sinner, yet I will not change my Condition with him if I mought to have his Kingdom.' May 1, 1686

The crowd show their Protestant sympathies in a manner congenial to them, and there are free fights between the City apprentices and the trained bands. 'On Sunday some boys and rabble were very rude in Lime Street, at the residence of the Prince Palatine, where the priests were at their devotions; one had his head broke, but by the help of constables and my Lord Mayor the rabble were dispersed, and some taken and committed;' on the Sunday following the same scene is repeated.

Lord Powis, as a Roman Catholic Peer, was very unpopular. He had just built a grand house in Lincoln's Inn Fields and was known to be much trusted by the King. Mun writes how 'Mrs. Powis

[his next-door neighbour] Lyeth now sick of the small Pox, in her fine new Dampe House, with her fresco shash windows & coole guilt leather & smelling Paint, & they say shee is with child, so it may goe hard with Her.' Penelope hears the Duchess of Grafton lament to the Queen 'that her father dyed a papist, but lately turned; she exprest much troble, twas not thought wisely don to show it at court.' 'The D. of Albemarle has laid down all his com^{ns} on my L^{d} Feversham being made Lieut. Gen^{l}.'

July 7, 1686 John tells Sir Ralph 'that Mr. Lee [Lord Lichfield's brother] is said to be married to one Mr. Williamson, a sergeant-at-arms' daughter, that lies at Westminster; it seems she and her sister used to come to the confectioner's where he lodged. I have seen and talkt to 'em; she is not a beauty, but her portion is £1,000.' 'Lady Henrietta Wentworth is dead & hath given all her Estate to her mother for life, & then to my Lord Lovelace, so shee will bee a brave match for Sir William Smith.' The latter had recently lost his wife, Doll Hobart, with less regret than the family felt to be her due. 'My Lord Chancellor's brother, Mr. Jeffereyes, lately consul at Alicant, hath received the honour of knighthood.'

The King is making a real effort to improve the efficiency of the army; he reviews single regiments in Hyde Park, and compliments Lord Lichfield on the smartness of his men; he is accessible to any private who can give him information. 'As the King came

from Councell 7 or 8 Souldiers Scotch & Irish Presented themselves to him, who came from the Buss in Holland, his Maj : tooke one of their Musquetts in his hands & vewing it found it to be of a size longer then those his souldiers use : after discoursing them, he Ordered they should be provided for. . . . Abundance of people go out of town, to see the gallantry of the camp at Hounslow Heath, where it's said the officers will be extremely fine.'

The popularity of the camp is, however, endangered by the outrages the soldiers commit on the civil population; discipline must have been difficult indeed to maintain, when the officers were constantly engaged in fighting one another. 'Mr. Culpepper brother & heir to my L[d] Culpepper shoots with a blunderbuss one M[r] Minshull of the Guards, brother to him of Borton by Buckingham; Sir Richard Temple calls him cousin and says he was not dead on Saturday.' 'One Mr. Ash (whose mother was Nancy Harrington's eldest sister) being a small officer in the camp, was killed by Capt. Cooke (who bought Skipwith's command), who darted his sword at Ash and killed him, for which he is at present withdrawn. Capt. William Freeman, who killed Mr. Ralph Freeman, of Surrey, at Epsom, is at Calais, and some say Lord Dartmouth hath obtained his pardon of his Majesty.' 'Capt. Bellinger and Capt. Pack fought in Leicester Fields, the former was wounded, but parted by Harry Wharton and Mr. Smith.' 'The small officers' are amply warranted by the behaviour of

Aug. 3, 1686

Dec. 2, 1686 their seniors. 'Admiral Herbert coming with Colonel Kirk from dining in the City to the Play House, cut (on what provocation I know not) Lord Devonshire's coachman; on which his Lordship said nobody should correct his servant but himself. I heard they were to fight, four against four. But his Majesty hath been pleased to prevent it.' 'A soldier pistoll'd a watchman in Southampton Buildings, saying, some time before, he had been affronted by a watchman there, of which he was resolved to be revenged, and therefore went to them and killed one, whether he that affronted him or another it mattered not.'

Murders are too common to excite much comment, but the civil worm turns at last when 'Six or 8 souldiers goe from the Camp to Robb an Orchard. The Provo's seized them, & bringing 'Em near their own Regiment, about 200 men with drawn swords Rescued 'em, & the Provo's made their Escapes into the Officers Tents, who protected 'em untill the Generalls came who appeazed 'em, yet 2 or 3 were Kill'd in the fray.' The sacred rights of property being thus threatened, 'His Majesty came himself to the Camp' to avenge the sack of the orchard, '& drew out the Army, where some of the Mutiniers were Punished.'

What with brawls and accidents, Sir Ralph's town correspondents have plenty of news for their letters:

'On Sunday, July 24, the rabble got together July, 1687 again about the Welsh Camp (as they call the fields

about the Cow-keeper Griffith's house) where with brickbates, which they had from a Brickill near at hand, and which they conveyed about with 'em in wheelbarrows, they pelted the Train-bands, but they did not any great hurt nor received any, only 'tis reported that handsome Fielding with his naked sword scower'd amongst 'em and wounded some of the rabble, and one of the Militia shot a maid dead (in the breast); she only came to see fashions. . . . At Evesham (vulgarly Epsom) two women were killed by the overthrow of a coach in which they were.' 'Tis said that Capt. Swifnix, who in Ireland would not deliver his commission to the Lord-General, is in that kingdom by 15 or 16 men cut to pieces; he was formerly a highwayman in England.

'Some days past, a barge or pleasure boat going up the river, with four young women and a blackmore, were all drowned on their way to the Camp about Twittenham, by the barge's oversetting, but all watermen were saved; they were young Greenwich ladies, two of them great beauties, a third very handsome, the fourth plain; the eldest of them about 22 years, the beauties 15, and one of them an only child. On Sunday the 30th. of July the rabble were again disorderly in Lambs Conduit Fields, and pulled down a Music-house Booth, making merry with the wine and other liquors, and the brickbats did also fly about, but there was no mischief done, only one citizen (a scrivener, I think), coming thither to see fashions,' evidently a very dangerous amusement, July 1687

'was shot thro' the leg, and so was carried off, and one of his legs is since cut off.' There was the further excitement of 'a whale who came up as high as Woolwich, and was hunted and shot at and much wounded, but she made towards Gravesend, so I suppose she is got to sea again,' having had quite enough of the turbulent City. Dr. Paman writes that 'One in a coffee-house looked so earnestly upon Sir R. Le Strange, that he must ask what he meant—he said he took him for the observator—"Well, what then, said Sir R.?" saith the other. "I find you play very well upon the trump marine, who can vary so many several notes upon one single string; & besides they say you writ the Letter to the Dissenter." "You are mistaken, I answered it." "Nay then," saith the other, "you are mistaken you published it, but you did not answer it." An answer to the answerers of the Letter is come out, which hath wit in it.'

Nov. 21, 1687

At Claydon, the joy felt at Sir Ralph's return to the House of Commons in May 1685 was damped by the prorogation of the Parliament in December, and also by a grievous private calamity—the loss of John Verney's young wife.

Her life came gently but swiftly to a close; the responsibilities of a wife and mother had been laid too soon on girlish shoulders, and though she carried them bravely, her strength was not equal to her courage and capacity. Elizabeth Verney died in London, May 20, 1686, in the twenty-second year of

her age. When John buried his 'Dearest Joy' in the vault at Middle Claydon, he buried with her the

M. S.
ELIZABETH VERNEY
Wife to John Verney of Wasing
in ye County of Berks Esq.
2d Son of Sr Ralph Verney K.t & Bar.
The Eldest Daughter
of Ralph Palmer of Little Chelsey
in Middlesex Esq.
She left foure Children Viz:
Ralph Elizabeth Mary & Margar.
And Departed this Life
the XX.th of May Ao Do. MDCLXXXVI
In ye 22th year of her Age.
Erected to ye Memory of his most beloved
& most Deserving Wife.

happiest chapter of his life. There was no break in the outward activities of his career; he was not a man to trouble others with his sorrows; to them he

was the efficient, successful, rather cold, man of affairs he had always been, but

> 'God be thanked, the meanest of His creatures
> Boasts two soul-sides—one to face the world with,
> One to show a woman when he loves her!'

Sir Ralph was extremely unwell at the time of Mrs. John Verney's death, and the Claydon people, who are 'heartily sorry' to hear of it, are yet more anxious about their kind old landlord. Dr. Denton is pining 'to let blood under his tongue,' which Sir Ralph 'has noe minde to.' Coleman, the steward, writes: 'I am soe concerned to hear your illness to continue, that I am not able at present to wright to you about any businesse for teares; my prayers I am sure & some hundreds in the County about you, are for your long life & health, both amongst us your Servants & them your neighbours . . . . I will to the best of my power bee careful of all your businesse I am imployed in, & observe all your commands about Mrs. Verney's comeing downe to be buryed.'

May 24, 1686

John is attending to every detail of the funeral, and of the mourning for the motherless babies; they are to wear crape at 17*d.* a yard, Sir Ralph's cloth-crape costs but 14*d.* The portly coachman, Philip Buckley, is to have two specially large dimity waist-coats at 10*s.* and 'a Pair of mild Serge breeches at 11*s.*' Mrs. Lillie, the housekeeper, sends up 'a bitt of silk for a pattern of the church cushings,' which are evidently to be also garbed in black.

Coleman writes again, 'Here are people daily to

inquire of your good health. . . . most that know your Worship doe pray for your health, Mr. Butterfield last Tewsday praid for you in the Church & I hope it will please God to heare our prayers, it being I am sure from mee with an humble heart. M^r^ Fall & M^r^ Rutherford of Roxton was here at M^rs^ Verney's buriall, but did not stay to supp here, M^r^ White & his daughters & M^r^ Jos: Churchill & his wife & 3 children stay'd supper.' Mun, who is deeply grieved for his brother's loss, is at his wit's end to devise more remedies for Sir Ralph, as 'he hath been Blooded, Vomited, Blistered, Cupt & Scarifyed, & hath 3 Physicians with him, besides Apothecary & Chirurgien;' strange to say, 'hee continues still very weak.' Mun himself takes 'Venice Treacle every night & many other nasty Apothecarys things.' He is recommended Islington, Epsom, or Tonbridge waters. Grosvenor believes that the waters of Astrop, which he might drink at home, are 'as sanative as the waters about London, which are so chargeable they resemble those of Bethesda, which had noe virtew till an Angell had stirr'd them.' The invalids send their condolences to each other. 'I see you are weary,' Sir Ralph writes, 'of taking any more physicall things, but those that are either old or infirm must be content to doe it some Times.' Cary Stewkeley is in charge of Mun's household, a *persona grata* with him and with Mistress Molly, who has now returned from school. May 29, 1686

There is another family funeral this summer;

Alexander Denton (senior), of the Middle Temple, died June 8, 1686; the steward's bill for his burial at Hillesden, 'just by the old tower in the Chancel,' is 45*l.* 13*s.* 2*d.*, including 1*l.* 10*s.* 'for gold rings for D^r^ Sharpe & D^r^ Sherlock that gave my Master the Sacrament & prayed for him in his last illness.'

We have glimpses from time to time of the beautiful mistress of Hillesden; she is fond of her embroidery; Sir Ralph matches her silks in town, and she writes affectionately of her children. Suddenly a calamity falls on Hillesden House far more bitter to the family than aught that fire and the sword had wrought there during the Civil War.

Alexander Denton and Hester Harman were 'married in 1673 in Middleton Stony Church in Oxon by Mr. Banks;' the rest is told in John Verney's pocket-book. 'After she had had 7 children, on Thursday 29th March 1688, she left his house & him, & Monday Sept. 17, 1688, she was delivered of a girle, w^ch^ he w^d^ not own, named Eliz. who soon died. This his wife Hester died in Aug. 1691 about Spittlefields & was buryed in Stepney Ch. meanely.' There was a painful trial, in which it was held that as the unhappy woman had carried off with her a sum of 500*l.*, she had forfeited all claim on her husband for support; her own fortune he had long ago squandered. Sir Ralph wrote once to let Alexander know that he had heard of Hester in London; he only replied that he wished her at Jamaica, and her name drops out of the family life.

In the spring of 1687 Nancy Nicholas is 'disposing' of her only daughter Jenny 'in the wae of matrimony:' 'tis to one Sir John Abdy a Bart, of Albins in Essex, his estate is £1500, the house very well furnished thorow out, the joynter £600, no father nor mother, a debt of some £1400 that I hope they will wether out prety esily . . . heare are many qualifycations for making a wife happy.' The younger members of the family did not approve the match, and the mother allows that 'he is no baby, nor so fine a bred man as Sir Ralf Verney,' 'truly he bareth as various carectors as any man in England can doe . . . the sober prudint persons such as Sir Thos. Dike, Sir John Bramston & your once a quaintans Mr Garvis who has been 3 weeks in his house, says he was never drunk in his life, that he never gaimes, that he has not Sir R. V's parts, yet he understands his busines very well . . . he is good humoured, frank, and for entertainments in his house.' On the other hand he bore an 'ill carector in the titell tatell' of society, and among 'the sparks of the town & gentlemen that sett their cravat strings & periwigs well.' Jenny leant to their opinion, though her elderly suitor expressed himself as 'much pleased with her;' by the end of a fortnight her mother reported that the match was off, yet 'he importunes her every day to come on again, how her good natuer will work I know not for she is perfectly left to herself—tis she must live with him.'

April 16, 1687

April 26, 1687

The girl was just of age; the good-natured Mun

May 1, 1687 sympathised with her reluctance. 'Cosen Jinny Nicholas Cannot Love an old Man, and I cannot Blame Her, for old Age is very disagreable unto youth: and I presume her ffather and Mother Have to much Kindnesse for Her then to fforce her. Cosen Doll: Wythers cast off this old Gallant formerly.' Whatever Nancy's theories might be, she was too benevolent a despot to be really neutral, and but ten days after this letter Mun hears from Oxford that his son's chum, Denton Nicholas, has gone up with his father, mother, grandfather and brother to attend Sister Jenny's marriage. 'I find that Jinny Nicholas,' Edmund writes, 'is now my Lady Abdy: and plentifully marryed: Hath a brave House and Land and Great store of good Goods, Besides Honor, of all wch I wish her much joy.' The good wishes were realised; we hear the next spring 'that my

April 7, 1688 Lady Abdy Doth Lye in of a Boy: to the great Joy of that ffamily;' and the child grows 'soe very sensible beyond his age that they fear for him.' It was Lady Abdy's delight to receive her father and mother and her grandfather at her country home, and the numerous Stewkeley and Adams girls were not forgotten. In September 'The Piazza family have gone to bury old Lady Nicholas at Horsely.' The doctor is much at home at Albyns; he speaks of himself sarcastically as 'lolling on bed or couch,' of no more use in the world, though he can get no one else to think so. Any ailments in the family, however, speedily make him forget his own, and he

prescribes energetically for Sir Ralph 'a syrup of Scabious, with whey, or gorse boiled with Damask roses,' which sounds delicious.

Meanwhile, in the great world outside, James II. was fast alienating his best friends. Dr. Paman describes how the Nuncio was received at Windsor: July 5, 1687 'the King spoke to the D. of Somerset to receive him, but he refused, for by the law yet in force it was treason. . . . About 16 coaches attended the Nuncio; when he appeared he made 3 obeisances, the King & the Queen as often rose up. The D. of Grafton introduced him.' It is not surprising to hear after this 'that his Majestie is but slenderly met Aug. 21, 1687 in his progress by the Nobility & Gentry of the Counties as he passes.' He is soon busy turning out Magistrates from their commissions and officers from their commands, and a commission is going to Oxford 'with large powers of suspending, expelling, etc.' He had offended both counties by dismissing their popular and capable lord lieutenants, the Earl of Abingdon and the Earl of Bridgwater, who, as Lord Brackley, had won the famous Bucks election of 1685. Sir Ralph hears from John that he and 'S^{r} Dec. 5, 1687 Tho Tirrell & S^{r} Tho: Lee are left out of the Commission of y^{e} peace, I doe not doubt but what ever is meant by it is however to you a kindnesse, by discharging you of soe greate a trouble & charge too, But I feare the Country will miss you.' The political animus of the transaction is shown by Sir J. Busby being retained. The time was gone by when Sir

Ralph might have been fretted by so ungracious an action; he replies with great serenity: 'If I am left out of the Comission of the Peace I shall have the less trouble, & my yeares require a Writ of Ease, & I shall bee very willing to sit still.' 'Tho' you care not for it,' Dr. Denton writes, 'yet I believe y^{r} neighbours will.'

The college with which the Verneys were connected by so many old ties is next attacked. Lord Abingdon, who had stood by the King so stoutly during Monmouth's rebellion, 'sent to y^{e} fellowes of Magdalen wishing he had preferments for 'em all, but since he had not, that they should be wellcome at his house to Beef & Mutton—for which he had a reprimand from his Maj^{te} for being soe kind to those that had been the Insolent oposers of his Maj^{ties} Comands, or words to that purpose.' At the same time it is rumoured, on the death of the great headmaster of Westminster, 'that one Poulton, a Jesuit, who was Schoolmaster at the Savoy, is to succeed Dr. Busby. The Doctor has left nothing to Sir J. Busby or his children, but all to pious uses.'

When James desired the clergy to read the Declaration of Indulgence from the pulpit, the Rector of Claydon, as we know, refused to do so; indeed Sir Ralph can hear of 'none about us that read it, but 2 very ordinary persons, having but poor livings.' Anne Nicholas, writing from her daughter's home in Essex, makes merry over the way in which another clergyman endeavoured to neutralise the ill effect of

his compliance—'We have no news hear but of a Rector in this Cuntry, y^t^ when y^e^ declaration was to be Red, they gave it him up as he was going into y^e^ church to read, & he knew not what y^e^ paper was, & read it when he had don, "Beloved," sais he, "Hur has read you a paper y^t^ has nothing in it good for Body or sole, but Her will goe in to y^e^ Pulpit & preach that to you w^ch^ shall be good for Body & sol, & so Her did Make a Prechment to y^m^."' Aug. 1, 1688

Nancy feels proudly that she has picked up another gem—'ye newest in Land news I have is of the Mayor of Scarborough, who came up to the K & profest if he might be maid Mair, he w^ld^ doe great things, in particular have the Declaration red; so he was put into his desired offes & afterward sent for ye Minister & gave him ye Decl^n^, but when ye time came he did not read it; & ye Mair maid him be puled out of his Pulpit & had another thair to read it; ye congregation sang Psalmes & a great bussel there was in ye church; & when church was dun, ye soldears stood Redy & caut up ye Maior & tossened him in a blanket. The Mair is now in town, come up to complain of ye solders, ye chef offiser their was our cousen Ously.' Capt. Osley (as he is called elsewhere) being 'wanted' retires to Holland. Sept. 11, 1688

When there is a question of prosecuting the contumacious clergy, the Bishop of Rochester in a manly letter gives up his seat on the Ecclesiastical Commission, 'Importing that tho' by his Conf^n^ he cou'd Aug. 22, 1688

Read y^e^ Dec^n^ yet he suppos'd others that refused it did soe by their Consciences, & therefore he could not in Con^ce^ Punish 'em, knoweing 'Em to be a wise, Religious Clergy, & therefore he thought it more hon^ble^ to suffer with 'em, then to make them suffer, Or words to that purpose, & withall he desir'd to be dismist from farther attendance.'

Private patrons are anxious about their livings.

Aug. 14, 1688 Dr. Denton hears that 'Pigott hath endowed Ditton Chapel with £50 pr. an: as a Donative, that it may not be subject to any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, his wife with 4 others to present but negatively noe nonconformist, his Almeshouse 2^s^ a week apiece & 20^s^ for a gowne.' 'The L^d^ Tirconnell & the Titular primate of Ireland have had some words, the former desiring him not to Ordaine soe many Ignorant, Dull, Priests as he did, for Ireland, he said, did already swarm with them; whereat the Primate was soe angry that he is come into Eng^d^ to make his complaints.'

As if to prove that no good gift of fortune could benefit the Stuart dynasty, the arrival of the long desired heir to the throne coincided with the most unpopular act of James's reign. The child was born on Sunday the 10th of June; on the Friday following the seven Bishops appeared before the King and the Privy Council, and were sent to the Tower; and there, writes Dr. Denton, 'they are most mightily visited, courted highly by the multitude at Whitehall craving their benediction, as they took water, and

so again as they landed at the Tower so that they could scarce get into the Tower.' Sir Ralph 'longs to heare how the Bishops are treated, I pray God to make them ffirm to doe that wch may most conduce to his Glory & the good security of the Ch. of England.'

'On fryday the 29th The Bishops were tryed, Theire Jury were the twelve first returnd Excepting Sr John Bury & Mr Hewers wch two did not appeare. The Lawyers Argued on 4 Points in Each of wch Holloway & Powell differed from Wright & Alibone, for the K: Were the Atturney & Solicitor Sergt Trindar, Sr Bar-Shores, Balouck, Wright. for the Bishops were ffinch, Pemerton, Polixfen, Sawyer & Ireby, Summers & one other who outdid themselves, after about 9 howres the Jury had a Glass of wine & a Crust of Bread at the Barr & then went to the affaire wherein thay came not to a finall Agreement untill Satturday morning, when they came into Court & their Verdict was Not Guilty: at wch there was a greate huzza in the hall: tis said some of the Jury were very froward most of the night for a Contrary Verdict, & some presume to name them. Williams was twice hisst at the Tryall: The Councill Were 7 on Each side, There were about 36 Peeres present, & some observed when the Ld Pt came into Court to give his Evidence that the Peeres did then put on their hatts, those that were uncovered, Alsoe when finch was arguyng a Point wherein he said the K: Lords & Comons assembled in Parliamt: (It July 5, 1688

being about the Lawes) the Nobility bowed to him Uncoverd as a Testimony of their thanks. Powell spoke soe much that some askt if he were Advocate for the Bishops.'

The bonfires that were lit in honour of the Prince of Wales paled before those that blazed forth, when the acquittal and release of the Bishops became known, and the fact that these latter were strictly forbidden only made them burn the more fiercely. Even loyal Oxford makes no sign when the news of the Prince's birth arrives; 'there was a bonfire at Magdalen, but at no other College.'

'Judge Roth^{m} speaking of the Bishops said they were Blockheads, noe Grammariams & that they wrote false English in their Petition & much more such stuff.'

Aug. 8, 1688

'Judge Heath that came to Northampton and Leicester,' writes Pen Stewkeley, 'gave in his charge that all that made Bonefiers for y^{e} Bushops being freed, shoud bee indited, for hee said it was a riat, & that they did not show themselves good subjects to theare King, but did it on purpos to Affront his magistey, & many such like things hee speakes. The Maior of Norhampton has killed a wagoner, y^{t} would not goe out of y^{e} roade his wagon being loaded, & theare ware 3 condemed for mordering an inkeeper, and proved plain against them, but its said y^{e} have presented Father Petters wth £500, and y^{e} have a repreive, & its said none shall soffer, but those y^{t} made y^{e} bonefiers shall smart.'

In London 'Tis said that Sir N. B. came out of his house with sword in hand to suppress the Boyes that made Bonfires but they call'd him Quack & made him glad to take shelter againe.' 'At Buck^m there were a great many Bonfires for the Inlargement of the Bishops & great Acclamations of the people but without any tumult.' July 4, 1688

'A Knight at Epsom that had spoak very reflectingly of the Bishopps before their Tryall, when newes came that they were acquitted, severall Gentlemen went to him & accusd him of it, for which they said they would Toss him in a Blankett, But he profest his greate respect for those prelates, & that they were mistaken, for he onely told people what some Irishmen said of the Bishops; soe they seemd sattisfyed, but this comeing to some Irishmen's Eares, they to Justifye their Country came to the Knight, & told him for the falsity laid on their Country-men, unless he produced them, they would toss him in a Blanket publiquely, and twas with greate difficulty & shame that he Escaped.' July 13, 1688

In London the rejoicings for the Prince of Wales began during a heavy storm of thunder and lightning, that put all puny fireworks to shame, but John considered that they made a good show on the Thames, '& after them the Greate Guns fired at the Tower & alsoe several vollyes of small shott at the Camp, which I could plainly heare on the Water.' The sound of the guns has hardly died away when 'The Lady Ash is confined to her house for speaking

Scandalously of the P: of W:' and other persons 'are seized for talking of him.' It was a strange fate for the lawful heir to the British Crown to be dubbed 'the Pretender' from his cradle to his grave.

June 21, 1688 'Kneller the painter has drawn the Prince' at about a week old, '& 20 copies are already bespoken of him. Tis said the D^ss^ of Monmouth is often at Court & the K. is kind to her children.'

'The Prince was severall times before his goeing to Richmond Carryed by his Lady Governess [Lady Powis] into the King's Garden at S. James's to take the Ayre. A Bedd is sett up at Richmond for the Queen's Majestye to lye there sometimes when she comes to see the Prince. The King and Queen are at Windsor. . . . The Queen Dowager hath layd asside her thoughts of buying the Earl of Devonshire's house in Darbyshire, & his Majesty hath perswaded her to settle nearer London.'

'At Whitehall the Fine Cristall Glass was taken out of the D. of Portsmouth's windows since she went away, & the holes stoppt up with straw very scandalously.'

John writes in August—'Reports are soe false soe different and soe many that noe true conjecture can be made, onely that wee seem to be Extreamly allarm'd, and worke hard as well Sunday as Worky-dayes to gett out a ffleet, and the Dragoones are gone to the Sea Coasts, as well as other Regiments.' 'Drums are beating up about Wapping for seamen, but few come in.'

Amongst these reports is one that 'The Prince is Indisposed, having been fed on barley gruel with currants in it, 'twas thought fitt that he should suck, & a Plaisterer or Tylers wife was made Choice of, on whom some say the King hath been pleased to settle a Considerable pension for her & her husband's life Whether the Prince live or dye, & he is sent in some Comand into the ffleet, & some say he was Knighted before hee went.' Not only is this illustrious individual sent to strengthen our defective Navy, but the Baby is formally made an Admiral. Aug. 9, 1688

'Abbot Barberini is to bring the consecrated clouts to England; they are 3 suits richly embroidered with gold.' The Prince was christened James Francis Edward; 'the Pope and the Qu. Dow^r^ Catherine of Braganza being gossips;' they could not have been better chosen, if the King's aim had been to alienate the sympathy of his subjects.

Ormond, the last survivor of the devoted King's Men of a nobler time, is taken away from the evil to come, and the young Duke appears at Windsor to 'deliver to his Majestye his Deceased Grandfather George & Garter. The late Duke's White Staff will not be disposed of until after the solemnizeing of the funerall, where some say it shall be broke over the Coffin.' Aug. 3, 1688

To emphasize the contrast between his father's servants and his own, we hear constantly of the favours King James showered on Jeffreys. His eldest son has just made a brilliant alliance.

'On Tewsday the 17th at Bulstrode the Lord Chanc[lors] Son (aged 15 very low of stature but a fine Schollar) was married to the Daughter of y[e] Last Earl of Pembroke by Portsmouth's Sister, & some say they were Againe Married after the Romish Manner the latter End of the weeke, very lately there was a Decree passed in the young Ladyes favour, she is 13 yeares of Age & taller then her husband. The King was pleased to Weare a Wedding favour of the Lord Chancellours Sonns, and all the Privy Councellours had alsoe favours given them.' Soon after the audience granted to young Ormond, the King and the Queen go down to Bulstrode to dine with the Lord Chancellor and enjoy his refined society.

July 26, 1688

John is entertaining some of his wife's family in August, who are staying with him in town 'to see Bartholemew Faire.'

The officers who have been cashiered for refusing to admit Irish Roman Catholics into their regiments 'behave themselves resolutely when tried,' and John believes their pictures will be sold 'as 'twas done for the 7 Bishops,' so great is their popularity. Much had been done to disoblige the army; the previous year Sir R. Temple is horrified that the King has turned 'Ch: Just: Harbert's elder brother out of a company bought for 800 guinyes, for refusing to repeat the Test, & the E. of Worcester out of a reg[t] on the same acc[t] who is succeeded by my L[d] Powis' sonne.'

Mun reports the Claydon news in return: 'I

believe the match between Mr Duncombe and Mrs Kitty Busby is quite off again, & if she is to have 3000 pounds as I heare she is, I would not wish her such a monstrous clown for I think she deserves a much better.' The Duncombes were thrown into 'a great bustle,' the old man haggling much about settlements; there are even better jokes about the girl's father. 'Sir John Busby seeing his Lady's hoggs, wch I might say were his owne, muzeling some offal Corne by his Barne door, in a great fury charg'd his gun with great shott, fired & missed their bodies filthily,' but hit their legs, Lady Busby cries, and pays secretly for them to be doctored, being valuable beasts worth each 40*s*. When they recover, Sir John, as blind to his own interests as the King, shoots at them again, with less murderous results than the weeping lady fears; one hog falls, the rest grunt, squeal and disappear. Mun is greatly entertained by the vagaries of his hot-tempered neighbour, 'Sir Tarbox Busby,' as he is called in the squibs of the time. Aug. 11, 1688

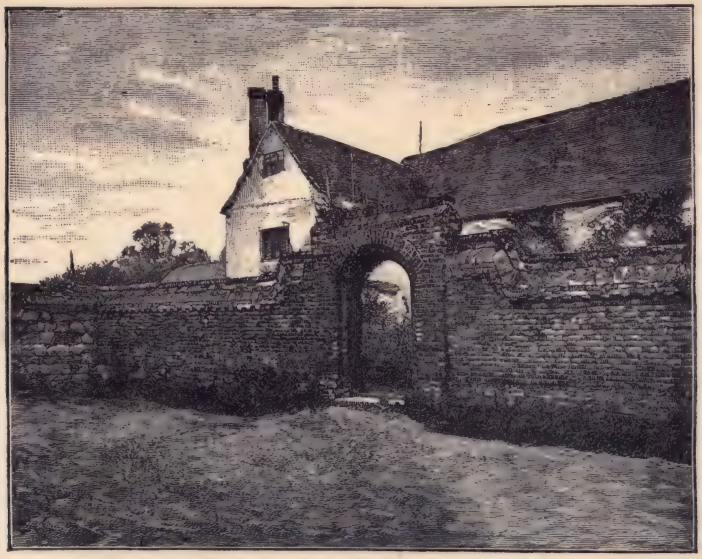
On September 3, 1688, Edmund wrote from East Claydon another of his chatty letters to John in London. 'Deare Brother, I Received yours of the 29th last past, and understanding from my Cosen Natt Hobart and my Sonne what good sport There was at Quainton Race the first day where Chesney the Horse Courser made Thousands of Men Runne after Him with their Swords Drawne, He shott his Pistol at Sir Thomas Lees man Mr Cull, and overthrew Him and his Horse together, and swore Like any Lover that

Hee would Have the other Pluck at Mrs. Hortons 5,000£ still, so the next Day I went my selfe to the Race, & Carryed my Cosen Cary and my Daughter in Hopes to meete with the Like diversion, But He was not so obliging to the Company as to Give them the same Pastime, so my Cosen Dentons man Valentine Budd Ridd for the Plate & wonne it, it was a Sylver server, his Horse that wonne it was a grey, There was a Child ridd over and almost Killed, & old Claver of Weeden ffell off from his Horse Being very Drunk, I saw my Cosen Charles Stafford there, & severall Ladys and Gentlemen But not T: S, nor Sr R.T. nor Sr J.B. who is gone away no Body Knows where, nor no Body Knows when He will returne. Sr W. D[ormer] never came to the Race, wch troubles his Granddam Extremely, I Have a Storry to Tell in the next Sheet, that will fill it up & so I shall conclude This who am your most loving Brother & sarvent EDMUND VERNEY.'

The 'story' was never told. The next morning, hearing nothing till 8 o'clock, his servants went into his room, and sent a terrified message to Middle Claydon, that their master was sleeping so heavily they knew not what to fear. Sir Ralph arrived in his coach before nine, a surgeon was sent for, who bled him, 'the Queene of Hungary's water & severall other things were applyed to him, nothing would recall him.' At ten it was all over, and Sir Ralph sat down in the desolate house, and sent an urgent appeal to John to make instant preparations

for the funeral, concluding in a very shaky hand, 'God in mercy fit us all for Heaven, Your unfortunate father RAPHE VERNEY.'

He encloses a list of Mun's household for whom mourning will be required. 'Dover his confidential servant, Harry the Coachman, Ned Smith the Groom,



THE WHITE HOUSE, EAST CLAYDON

Thomas Very the Carter, Tom Butcher a Footman, Jacob Golding a Footboy, & little Jacob Hughes about 9 yeares old taken out of Charity. Your Brother's Wife, your Brother's Daughter, Cary Stewkeley, Mrs. Curzon, Two Chambermaids that attend on his wife's person, Doll the Cooke, Anne the Dayry Mayd.' The names are written on the back

and front of an old playing-card, another hint of the untidy condition of the house, where the kind-hearted, careless master had scarcely breathed his last, before it seemed as if everyone had a debt to claim, or a story to tell against him. Lady Gardiner describes Edmund's death as being to himself, 'sudden, rather than unexpected; hee severall times told mee he was confidint hee was neere his end, & so thought all as knew him . . he had many virtues more than most men have.' His intercourse with his father had been specially affectionate and intimate during his last years, and he taught his children to look up to their grandfather in everything. His debts were no new thing. 'You will not pay them,' Sir Ralph had said, 'in ten years after I am dead.' Edmund would never suffer such an allusion; 'I desire not only the Honor to Bee (as I have been) y^r^ fellow Traveller in this World,' he wrote, 'but shall Bee Extremely well satisfyed & pleased to wayte upon you into the next, whenever it shall Please God to Summon you.'

The young heir was still at College; neither the widow, though just then in her right mind, nor the little terrified daughter could render Sir Ralph any assistance, and in those first miserable hours, when the old man was left alone in the deserted study to look through a mass of bills and papers, a great wave of bitterness swept over him, and he judged his dead son very hardly.

The money lent Edmund on bond, by the first

rough computation, amounted to some 4,500*l.* 'I finde yr Brother died very much in debt,' Sir Ralph writes again to John, 'but as yet I cannot say how much, therefore in my opinion it will be the best way to bury him privately in the night-time, without Escutcheons, or inviting of Neighbours to attend with their Coaches, which is very troublesome & signifies nothing.'

He is at no pains to conceal his mortification. To Sir William Smith he writes: 'You oblige me much by appearing sensible of the loss of my Sonne & if you knew in what a miserable condition he hath left his estate & Family, you would woonder at it, and hardly believe it; for its ill beyond Expression.' Many relations who have always loved Mun write with real affection, yet their chief anxiety is lest this should prove to Sir Ralph 'More affliction than his age can well bear.' Pen Stewkeley writes: 'I pray God my Uncle may not lay this too neare him, but bare it like himselfe.' She must buy fresh mourning, hers is all worn out, 'having been a long time together in that dismal habit.' Dr. Denton finds a strictly professional ground for consolation, in that Sir Ralph had providentially taken his vomit just before hearing the news, and reminds him that Mun 'hath left a hopefull young son, who will contribute much to put the estate into a good condition again. We all wish ourselves wth you to have the comfort of one another.'

The elaborate mourning required keeps all the

women of the family busy, Cary Stewkeley goes about with the steward and the carpenter, measuring the bed and all the furniture in the widow's chamber which is to be entirely covered with black, and makes out lists for Sir Ralph, while doing her best to soothe and comfort Mrs. Verney and Molly. But it is upon the son of the house that the heaviest burden falls. Summoned hastily from his happy careless life at Oxford, the boy of nineteen finds his home, so to speak, in ruins, and the father who had always been so good to him beggared at once of life and of reputation. Cary sums up what the family expect from the hope of Claydon, that he should do nothing 'to the prodigys of his helth,' and confide absolutely in his grandfather. Young Edmund shows good sense and feeling beyond his age. The situation is difficult enough; his mother's affairs and his own are in Chancery, and he feels himself, 'but as it were a steward to my Father's creditors.' He is surrounded by old servants and retainers, who have large expectations from the heir, which he is quite unable to fulfil; he is trying to get the superfluous men-servants into places, but they are not at all keen to go. His father's '2 great Horses eat up a deal of horsemeate, the Coach Mares do noe work, & the Greate Barne is so full of ratts, the wheat will soon be eat up & spoiled.' He tries to get in some arrears of rent, but his mother's tenants are clamorous in their requests, and with good reason; 'most of them assure me that my father

promised them such & such repairs, others say their Houses were begun in my father's time & I cannot tell what answer to make them.' One old man's 'actions,' Cary reports, 'is the wonder of markits as well as this towne, being called one of the Old Lords of Claydon; bot Harry Honnour has bin an old sarvant and so has his wife Doll, and both fixed heare, and therfore I wish them well setled, for I pitty every poor creature that has no shelter from wind and weather therfore care to say no more of him.' Mun dares not sell a horse because there are endless delays in making out the valuation, and he cannot even get in the undertaker's bill for his father's funeral; 'he is allwayes a burying somebody or other they tell me at his house when I call.' The garden alone seems to be in good order, 'very pleasant to walk in & the frute is as it should be.'

It is a solitary time at Claydon, for Sir Ralph and John are in town in October, but the lad writes them admirable business letters, and they write to him as regularly as they had written to his father. He is trying to disentangle the Estate accounts, and to make out the 'rent-services, freehold rents & quitt Rents, which did use to be mingled in the Rent-roll, with the other rents,' and to settle with a tenant whose sheep 'have flayed the fields.'

Sir Ralph sends 'Munsey' excellent advice. 'Be sure to give your mother's tenants good words but make none of them any promise for repairs, only that you will consider of it, & acquaint me with it when

I come, tis not a time of year for building, for the frost will fetch the mud walls whilst they are green & the days are growing so short that workmen cannot do a good day's work.' He recommends a ratcatcher, and warns him against being enrolled in the Militia in these unsettled times; he must plead youth. Sir Ralph breaks off abruptly, 'to write news is the way to have this letter stopped therefore tis best to leave all alone.' The lad has no wish to keep up the convivial reputation of the White House, but Cousin Denton is going to visit him and will expect Claret, can Sir Ralph furnish him? 'There is white wine, Sack & Rhenish in the house, but were I not sometimes bound in civility I should never care to drink a glass of wine as long as I live.'

John has got for his nephew 'a gentile & fashionable mourning sword for 7/6.' Cary Stewkeley rejoices that Mary Verney has been able to dine with them these four days, 'she is one I love extremely.' Later on Lady Gardiner visits the White House, and gratifies the poor widow by taking her constantly to Middle Claydon Church; though the elder lady feels the two miles troublesome to her, '& the more because I walk in patings.' 'All the congregation sems to rejoic to see her; good woman shee is very kind to mee, and Indeed I pleas her all I can.' When she is well 'she works from six to six,' but she usually spends much of her day in bed, and the watchman on his rounds hears her crying out for her maids in the night.

Lady Gardiner's account of Moll's wardrobe is tragic if somewhat mysterious. 'She is forst to ware her blak coat under her whit fustion, & tis a ridiculos sit to see her whit coat next her cloth crape coat for A father; she must have stoff to make her a petycoat to her night gownd, her old callowco petycoat I shall leve as far as it will goo & she must have 5 or 7 of the narrow lases wch Bell has on hers & blk silke to make it up; she must have 3 yds of any blk cloth crape to peas out her crape coat wch is to short to ware for shee is much growne. Bell must bespeak a pare of blak leather shus for her & charge the woman to make them strong, the very sols of her shus is worn off, she w[d] have them hansome as well as strong. She rons much A bout, & tis better to ware out her cloths then be sickly; she wants 2 blk top knots of tafety, a pare of blk leather glovs & some blk pins—wch things if she could be without them I wod not rit for them.'

The attention of the relations has been concentrated on East Claydon, but public events are now too grave to be ignored. 'War is in the air,' and such of the family as are living in London have the cheering conviction that the Metropolis will be the Seat of War. Riots increase; 'all meat risis in town & everything is snatched up, fearing the prince of orange sh[d] stop provisions comeing to this toune.' 'The rabble very rudely went to Barge Yard, defaced the Popish Chapel, breaking the windows, drinking up the Priest's liquors both wyne & beare, carrying Nov. 11, 1688

out what portable, to make a bonfire in the Market-place, L[d] Mayor's show was very poor this year.'

Oct. 29, 1688 Young Edmund had seen some of the dreaded Irish troops at East Claydon. 'This day passed by here 500 Irish ffoot souldiers in their march to London, & just at the townes end they quarrel'd amongst themselves about going over a stile in Newfield, and one of them was knock'd down & his scull much broken & he now layes insensible at Thomas Millers, 'tis thought he will dye very shortly if he is not dead allready.'

Sir Ralph, on his return home in November, is roused up at two o'clock in the morning to send men and horses for the Militia levies at Stony Stratford within twelve hours, 'all the Buck[m] trained bands are gon with thos forces as is to march against the Prince.' On the whole there is a strong feeling that 'the King will put all to a push & fight,' and this in spite of the desertions to the Prince of Orange, and the Princess Anne's 'prank, wch dus not a littell disples the King.' Cary Gardiner reports the town talk, 'that ther is grat hops of a hapy Settillment in fue months, all the protistants being in most things of a mind, & believed no blod will bee shed in warr, & that our King will rain more happily than he has dun, only thar is great doubts maid how the title of the P. of Wails [no bad name for that luckless infant] will be desided. . . . The Princ marchis slow his resons is not known.' Lord Abingdon and Tom Wharton were amongst the first to join his standard.

Dec. 5, 1688

The story Lord Macaulay has told once for all need not be repeated here, but after reading in the letters day by day of the contradictory rumours that keep up the tension of suspense in London, one feels that Cary sums up the situation admirably to Sir Ralph, who is awaiting events at Claydon: 'You will wonder at nothing now. Sertanly no Cronacill can paralell whot has bin produced in a fue weeks—time to have A King & Prince of Wales & A Queene fly from an Invader without A blow. . . . Ther is so many gon in A Weeks time as wod A mase you; night & day the water is full of barges. . . . Sir R. Temple is this day gon to the Princ, but thos as gos in now signifys Littell bot are rather laughed at. . . We expect the Princ here, in the mean time the moboly will pull downe all the chapels as is nuw set up. Skilton is fled & the City has seased the Tower . . . I thank you for your fat plovers & so conclud.' Dr. Denton writes 'We are all in a strange confusion, abandoned by K, Qu. & Pr. all gone cum pannis, confounded be all they y^{t} worship graven Images & boast themselves of idols. . . . Its said y^{t} my L^{d} Chan^{r} is gon along with them & consequently ye Seales, & a world more gone or goinge.' Dec. 12, 1688

There is great excitement in Buckingham when 'a calash dashes thro' with 2 gentlemen attended by 26 horsemen well armed & mounted,' whose blue coats are lined with orange serge—a new colour in English politics; great ladies are lining their petticoats with orange silk.

When Jeffreys abused Sir Ralph so bitterly after the famous Bucks Elections, Cary wished to see him a changed man before he died; his worst enemy must have been satisfied. John's letters in a crisis are as calm as a bill of lading, but the plain facts are too dramatic to need any dressing up; 'the L^{d} Chancellor yesterday morn goeing a long in a seaman's habit in Anchor Alley in Wapping was discover'd, his Lordship presently told the discoverer he would goe along with him but desir'd him to keep it private for fear of the people soe they went into an Ale house by & sent for a Constable, who with a Guard brought him to Town, all the people hurraying, & with difficulty did his guard keep him from the Rabble, nay one did strike at him, he was brought in to the Lord Mayors just at dinner time who when he saw ye L^{d} Chan: thro' feare fell a Cryeing then into a fitt, for which he was blouded & put to Bed, soe the Lord Mayor being ill he coud not sign any warrant, the L. Chanc: satt downe & Eate heartily, but turning about he saw S^{r} Rob^{t} Jefferyes Late Mayor who cryed & came to kiss his hand & then the L: Chan: alsoe cryed, he said what have I done that people are soe violent agst me, one answ^{d}: Remember Cornish, he said he would have sav'd him, but when he coud not he savd his Estate, & had not a penny for't, at length My Lord Lucas took charge of him & convey'd him to the Tower, he design'd for Hambrow & the Vessell was fitting with all Expedition wh: created some jealousy

that some greate person was to goe off in that ship.' John had dined with the Lord Chancellor some six months before, 'being feasted by him as being one of his Jury.'

London went through a short but anxious crisis. John describes the sacking of the Spanish Ambassador's house, and how 'The Mobb' [an abbreviation of *Mobile vulgus* now first coming into use] carried away the very boards and rafters.' 'The Amb^r valued his library at £15,000, the Plate, Jewells, Clothes, etc., were of vast value and Papists had carried all their best things thither presuming they would be safe. Ld. Powis has removed his things & my Lady lyeth at a neighbour's for fear they sh^d come thither.' John's friend Mr. Fall 'is a great sufferer, his windows are all beaten down & his house defaced.' 'Sir Henry Bond's fine house at Peckham' is threatened. The terror of the Irish night is still upon him as he writes: 'Last night twixt 1 & 2 we were all alarm'd by Drums & Bells that the whole Citty and subburbs were up, upon a Report that the Irish were assaulting houses & killing people near the townes End, all men gott to theire arms & lighted Candles in all theire Windowes & at their doores, but about 4 or a little after we began to be undeceiv'd & soe went to bed again leaving one or two in a house up: my Aunt Adams heard nothing of this for I sent to Covent Garden this morning to knowe how they all doe; In James Street & in the Piazza they were up upon the alarm.' Lady Abdy writes that the panic

Dec. 13, 1688

spread over 'most parts near London but the Irish did no harm but by their big words.' The best news John can send is that the King has gone off for the last time escorted by the Prince's Guards; 'tis said he wept as he left Whitehall, the P. of Orange is at St. James'.' 'His Majestie's going away is of great consequence higher than I can understand,' writes the prudent Mr. Cary, but to most people it meant that the game was up; the strong hands that now grasped the reins were not likely to drop them.

Sir Ralph and Sir R. Temple represented Buck^m^ once more in the Convention Parliament that sat from January 1689 to Feburary 1690, and did such memorable work for England. There is great joy in Bucks; Lord Bridgwater is reinstated, and old Dr. Townsend, who has only just done preaching obedience to Nero, beseeches Sir Ralph to get his son made 'Muster Master for the Train bands of the County,' under the new King.

April 14, 1689 'Sir R. Temple has his custom hous place again. I find he will be Vickor of Bray still, let who will raing, & tho' all hats him yet hee gets whot he aims at.'

Mun has been over to Oxford to pay up his bills, and 'has given a Treate to his Acquaintance in Trinity College.' His sister is anxious to join him in London for 'the Crownenasion, and I want clothes so mitily that I doe not know what to do, they will scarse hang on my back.' A tailor's bill for 'a close fitting Taby jacket' seems to prove that Molly had her wish.

The oppressor being defeated, men are now free to pity him, and to find fault with their deliverer. Cary writes to Sir Ralph: 'I hear the K is bying the E. of Notingham's hous at Kensington & implys 700 men in fitting Hamton Court for him, & the coronation I heare is talkt of, all thes things requires great sums of money: I confes popery wod A bin much wors for that wod A destroyed thousands of bodies & souls & estates in A short time; bot I heare there is great discontents now. I have sent you the K's speech wch I liked & disliked, hee being subject to sinsures as well as his meanest subjects.

'I was apt to beeleve King James was dead, not for the report of it, but because I think hee has a load heavigh enoufgh on him to waigh downe the greatest speryted man in the world: and ware hee the bitterest enymy to mee I could not but pity him, and bee glad to heare he had dyed a naturall death, afflictions causing too often great sperits to mak them selvs a way, w^{ch} I pray God presarve all christians from; I am satisfied by him and others that grif kils none; but God knows what is fitest for all, and therefore best to soffar patiently and wait till ther chang cometh.' There is still a ground swell after the storm, and Cary continues, 'I cannot bot put the present differences of thos as sits at the Helm amonxt my own afflictions, I feare a cevell worr, sinc both Ch: & Laety are so divided, & poor Iorland Lys a bleding.'

CHAPTER XII.

EXEUNT SEVERALLY.

1689–1696.

'No epilogue I pray you, your play needs no excuse; for when the players are all dead there need none to be blamed.'

As the eventful seventeenth century draws to its close, those who have played their parts with Sir Ralph in the Claydon drama are gradually leaving the stage. Before their places are filled by a younger generation of actors, a word may be said concerning the exits of some old friends.

To begin with the elder generation; the evergreen and incorrigible Tom claims the first place. He is still liable to sudden and unaccountable changes of abode, and his 'quarteridge' has of late been claimed from Welsh villages, whose many syllabled names have the desired flavour of remoteness. He was unreasonably abusive of a world in which he found so many kindly dupes, and flourished unabashed till 1707, when he was well over ninety. He then died 'merely of old age, his speech and memory perfect to the last.' Richard Seys of Boverton, Cardiff, writes to inform John Verney that 'ye old gent: y^{r} uncle has at last gone to his long home, I

April 1, 1707

find his late quarterly Revenue (like many of ye former) was in a great measure Anticipated, but J^n^ Deere by keeping him for some time to a weekly allowance has cleared all his old scores.' He died possessed of 22^s^ & 1^d^ and John asks Mr. Deere whether he had not 'some goods, as Books, Clothes, Plate, etc. wch being disposed of w^d^ suffice for his burial, without either you or I being out of pocket for your old acquaintance & my relation, whom I never saw in my life, tho' he hath had many a pound from me.' The venerable Tom's personalty consisted of 'a Bible & a Treatise of piety,' but he was 'very decently interred' at his nephew's expense, £1 being spent in distributing bread to the poor 'by his own desire,' and he was 'attended to his grave by a numerous company of the Neighbourhood,' the bell-ringers were properly fee'd, and the genteeler guests provided with wine, so that there is room for hope that Tom may have been satisfied at last!

Penelope was made to be a spinster, and though she twice attempted to frustrate Nature's design, her temperament was never really affected by marriage. She soon tired of Sir John Osborne's society, and was not more afflicted than good manners required, when she was again left a widow. But as the infirmities of age increased, her thoughts reverted with some autumnal gleam of tenderness to the baby-girl she had lost forty years agone. 'After driving up & down in the streets in my Coch, by 6 or 7 of ye clocke I am at home; & do find ye

nights so long,' but when she adds 'had God blest me with a Dau^r I had not kept a maid,' her theory of the uses of a daughter explains the reluctance with which her niece and namesake accepted Dame Penelope's invitations. 'My lady only wants me to wash up her old crape and such like work,' Pen Stewkeley declared. It was Lady Osborne's boast that she 'had lived a Laborious Life to make a fine shoe to the world, never to wayst one shilling to giv my selfe plesur,' and that was not the kind of housekeeping to make a young relation very comfortable. Like her sisters, she was skilled in domestic medicine; for a cold in the head she mixes 'a like quantity of White Hellebore root, & nutmeg grated, to take as you do snuff, it clears the brain; & bind conserve of Reddrosis upon y^r eyes layd upon a cloth prity thick;' at other times she recommends white rose water for the eyes, and a syrup of gilly-flower cordial. Dame Penelope was 'at home on Mondays to receive visits & they that please may play at cards.' The genteel persons who found their way to her rooms 'on the stairs at Whitehall' gossiped familiarly about the King and the Queen, in a way that would have delighted the Cranford ladies. But some of her grand friends are in queer straits. 'Her favourite L^d Peterboro' [on the brink of an impeachment] has removed all his things from his house in the country, even sold all Iron off his very gates, & puld down his wainscot, & sold it, nothing remains but the bare walls & windows.'

He, like many others of Penelope's acquaintance, had followed King James's change of faith, and Nancy Nicholas writes to Sir Ralph of a curious scene in Lady Osborne's death chamber. To the consternation of her relations, the dying woman desired the Countess of Lindsay, who was standing by the bed, to get her a priest, and 'for fear of the worst' Nancy undertook 'to write afterwards to her Lady^{p}.' 'I know she is yr particular frend,' she tells Sir Ralph, '& so I would not willingly disoblidg her, but in matters of this concern, we cannot be too cautious wheir soles air concerned.' The letter is curious enough to be quoted:

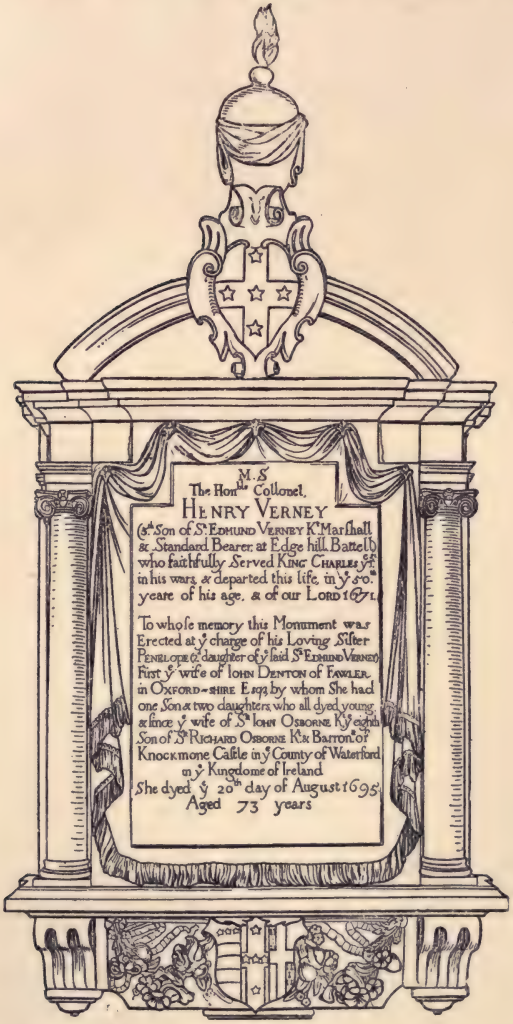
'Anne Nicholas to the Countess of Lindsay:' 'Yr La^{p} may well wonder at yr receiving these lines from me, being a quit stranger to you, but this coms in ye first place to give yr La^{p} thankes for yr great cair & Kindnes to my neare relation ye La' Osborn, who I heare in lightheartednes last night desired yr Lad^{p} to bring her a Prest; I besech yr Lad^{p} not to gratify her in this request, not yt I thinke her capable now to make any judgment of any religion, but S^{r} Ralph is of a great adg, & I feare such a shok now might hasten his end. I would have wated on yr Honnor, w^{n} you had bin at ye Lady Osborn's but yt my breth wont lett me goe upstairs & would have told you yt she hasn't nor won't want ye atendance of ye devins of our Church, for M^{r} Lankister & one in her own neygborhood doth & will atend her.'

Penelope died on the 20th of August 1695, aged 73. Her will is full of bequests to the great ladies it was her happiness to know; 'The C^tess of Lynsey' has a silver scollop cup and grater, 'The C^tess of Plymouth a serpentine cup with a silver cover, the C^tess of Carnarvon a Silver Toster to toast bread on, Lady Temple, a Bible with silver clasps & a candlestick, Lady Anne Walpole a cup, &c. &c.,' 5*l.* is left 'to a schollar from Oxford to preach her funerall sermon, £1 to the Parson that buries her, £300 to ye town of Buck^m the Interest of it for 6 Poore men, who are to have Green Gownes once in two yeares with a Badge of her father's Armes, S^r R. T. to name them during his life, & afterwards the Bailiff of Buck^m to fill up the Vacancies for Ever.'

All her nieces are remembered, Pen Stewkeley is appropriately left the clothes she had often helped to mend; but the legacies are carefully graduated. She felt that her silver plate and valuables could only be given to rich people who would take care of them; a pewter vessel, a brass chafing-dish, or a wooden table were bequests more suited to needy relatives, and when the poor parson's widow, Betty Adams, was reached, Nancy tells Sir Ralph that she is left 'Y^r picture & much lumber.' 'She died as she lived, I will say no more.'

One person alone had seen a more genial side of her character; Penelope wrote in old age, 'from my childhood I have loved my Brother Harry Verney, out of my narrow fortun I supplied him w^th

money & wanted myselfe; severall yers before he died I was his nurs, & this return he maid me that


M.S
The Hon^ble Colonel
HENRY VERNEY
(4th Son of S^r EDMUND VERNEY K^t Marshall
& Standard Bearer at Edge hill Battell
who faithfully Served KING CHARLES 1^st
in his wars & departed this life in y^e 50th
yeare of his age. A° of our LORD 1671
To whose memory this Monument was
Erected at y^e charge of his Loving Sister
PENELOPE 2^d daughter of y^e said S^r EDMUND VERNEY
First y^e wife of IOHN DENTON of FAWLER
in OXFORD-SHIRE Esq^r by whom She had
one Son & two daughters who all dyed young
& since y^e wife of S^r IOHN OSBORNE K^t eighth
Son of S^r RICHARD OSBORNE K^t & BART^t of
KNOCKMONE CASTLE in y^e County of Waterford
in y^e Kingdome of Ireland
She dyed y^e 20th day of August 1695
Aged 73 years

he truly loved me . . . I dare say no more upon this subject. I find it puts me to a sort of illness. . . .

To my Deare brother's memory I have maid this thome . . . & all thoms dos make appere ye honer of our family & Adorns ye Church.' She was laid beside him in the vault at Middle Claydon, and her name added to 'the An scription' on the monument. Her arms occupy the centre of the shield, and those of her two husbands are in subordinate places; typical of the lady who, though she kindly consented to bear the names of Denton and Osborne, was first and last and always a Verney of Claydon.

Cary Lady Gardiner, quick-witted and warm-hearted, was no one's enemy but her own, and if she lost money as fast as her sister hoarded it, she was rich in the affection that Penelope had never known how to win. At Claydon she and her girls were special favourites. Penelope (Viccors) and Kitty (Ogle) were married. Her blind daughter Margaret Gardiner lived with her, 'very sad to be quite dark.' Cary lived chiefly at East Claydon, Carolina and Isabella were at home. Her step-daughter Ursula, with all her madcap friends never seems to have found a mate. Cary Gardiner died at Islington, September 2, 1704, and was buried 'at Bray in Berks in a vault by her last husband.'

Of Sir Ralph's younger sister, Mary Lloyd, very little has come down to us, though the fact of her monument being in Chester Cathedral seems to imply that she was in easier circumstances in her latter years. From John Verney's pocket-book we learn that her children were Humphrey (b. 1657,

d. 1715), Verney (b. 1670), Mary (b. 1666), and Ruth (b. —, d. 1725). Mary Lloyd died in 1684; her husband survived till 1695. There is a letter to Lady Gardiner from 'Ensign Verney Lloyd in Col. Beaumont's Reg^{t} at M^{r} James, at The Three Herrings in little Lombard Street London.' He is twenty-two years of age, and has been serving 'under the D. of Leinster's command in Flanders, fortifying Dixmunde; the King has called us over to England, where we expect (as the Eldest Reg^{t}) to do duty in the Tower. 'Tis thought that 10 companies belonging to our Reg^{t} is cast away in the last great storme. . . . Had I Sir Ralphe's Countenance I neede not question a Company, for I daily see it that nothing but friends does the businesse, and upon the least Countenance in the world I should be advanced, for the colonell hath a great kindness for me.' Col. Beaumont is Governor of Dover; John Verney meets him at Sir Francis Lawley's.

Sir Ralph was glad to use his influence for a nephew who did him so much credit, and his letters show that Capt. Verney Lloyd kept up intimate relations with his mother's family. In 1704 Ruth Lloyd has taken a place as a waiting-gentlewoman, 'but has hir health so ill in sarves' that unless both her brothers help her, 'she cannot tell how to live.' Her sister Mary visits at Claydon in 1706, and is a friend of John's daughters. Capt. Verney Lloyd married Anne Gery, his daughter Elizabeth Lloyd married John Jackson, a solicitor, the

secretary and intimate friend of the 4th Duke of Leeds. Many of his descendants were distinguished in the Church, and in various branches of the public service, and several members of the Jackson and Warren families still trace their descent from Sir Edmund Verney the Standard-bearer, through his daughter Mary Lloyd.

Elizabeth Adams, after the death of the Rev[d] Charles Adams in 1683, 'seeking sum good plas to lay my grey head in,' settles herself in London; her daughters Margaret and Isabella are more popular than Betty had been as a girl, and are in great request. Betty still enjoys a good grumble; 'old & poor peopell,' she says, 'must expect slits from all sorts,' and she fails not to look out for them. She died December 27, 1721.

Dr. Denton's life, prolonged to the age of eighty-six, was vigorous and fruitful to the end. In middle life he had been more of a Royalist than Sir Ralph ever was, but so heartily did he approve of the Revolution, that one of his last literary efforts was a work, 'Jus Regiminis,' dedicated to William III., vindicating the King's position and the action of the English people. In 1691 Sir Ralph hurried up from Claydon on the news of the doctor's illness, and as they were together we have no account of his last hours—only a crumb of gossip that Sir Richard Temple failed to appear after his cousin's death, in all the 'blacks' he was in duty bound to wear. The doctor himself would have justified Sir

May 9, 1691

Richard. His very epitaph in Hillesden Church has the joyful note which was so conspicuous in his life: 'He was blessed with that happy composition of Body & mind that preserved him chearfull, easy & agreeable to the last, & endeared him to all that knew him.'

When we return to the White House there are great reforms; young Edmund, with Sir Ralph's advice, is getting the estate into order, and making a happy home for Molly. The brother and sister are very attractive figures; they are much attached to each other, and full of promise, when in the spring of 1690, Edmund sickened of a fever in town, and though devotedly nursed by Lady Gardiner and her daughters, and attended by a crowd of eminent doctors, 'as industrious to save him, as if he were a king,' he succumbed to it in a few days, before he had completed his twenty-second year. Life was very bright to him, full of hopes and ambitions, and he wanted to live, but to the comfort of his family he made a pious end, praying for his grandfather, and grateful for all the love that surrounded him, 'and many good things he said, but tis no wonder to see a man as has lived well, dy well.'

Once more a little fatherless girl is the heiress of the White House and of the manor of East Claydon. Molly's trouble is so great that Lady Gardiner is quite anxious about her; she thinks much of her father, who was 'most tender & loving to me & I being grown up to be A companyon to my last brother makes his loss very bitter to me.' She is a

tall slight girl of fifteen, and the sense she has suddenly acquired of being 'grown up,' makes her resent her grandfather's orders that her mourning should be 'as little & as cheap as possible, seeing she grows apace.' She writes her own protest to Sir Ralph; she would have a cloth gown as Mrs. Mary Gardiner

March 4, 1690 has for her sister. 'I know my morning will cost a good deall of mony, but I beleve you wod have me morn hansomly for so deare a brother, and since ther is none left but myself to morn for him, and I beg that I may have a tipit bought me, since every gentellwoman has one as makes any show in the world, it will cost £5 at least and my lady Gardiner is unwilling to by it till she has orders from you, but I hope if I do gett one you will not be angery.'

Sir Ralph is touched by the child's sorrow and sudden assertion of dignity, and replies very kindly:

March 9, 1690 'I cannot blame you for being so much concerned for the death of soe good a Brother, the loss being Generally great to all his ffriends & Relations, I pray God to Sanctify this Affliction to us, that wee may make good use of it. Since you desire Cloth for Mourning, I will not be against it, And I hope you will weare it with the more care & make it last the handsomer & the longer. I perceive you are very desirous to have a Tippet, though it will cost Five pounds, I am contented that you should have a very good one, though it should cost Five or Six pounds, and I pray tell my sister Gardiner soe: Child you see how desirous I am to please you, and I doubt

not but you will be as willing to please mee in all things which I shall desire of you, which will be a great satisfaction and comfort to me.' The tippet is highly approved of, and Lady Gardiner is doing her best to persuade Molly to eat, 'for her dyat is not as others; I take all the care I can of her, as the only relleck of yr eldest son.'

When she is settled again at East Claydon, the girl finds her home dull and sad, and the great difference in age between herself and Cary Stewkeley makes Cary, after Mun's death, the duenna rather than the companion of her young cousin. Molly longs for London, where a happy part of her childhood was spent, but Sir Ralph dreads for her the chances of infection, which have proved fatal to both her brothers. The lonely girl's chief confidante is a waiting-maid of her mother's, of doubtful discretion. Sir Ralph hears a report that 'Mr. Dingley, a Divine, under pretence of wooing the waiting-maid, Kate Bromfield, carries down a younger brother of quality with designs on M^rs^ Molly Verney,' and that they are lying at the lonely old house of Dorton, 'with design to ride over to East Claydon.' Instead of getting Molly to stay with him in town, where she might enjoy the companionship of girls of her own degree, and quietly dismissing the maid (as a woman would have done), Sir Ralph, in great anxiety, writes to his steward Coleman to intervene at this delicate crisis.

The man of affairs accordingly arrives at the White House, desires the attendance of the ladies,

unfolds his story, and conveys to them Sir Ralph's commands that no such guests be received on any pretext, and that 'Mistress Molly pretend some excuse & keep her chamber.' Mrs. Cary desired a copy of the letter; Mrs. Molly expressed no opinion, 'only read it & gave it me again & went away.' But Coleman had an uneasy feeling that he had not got to the bottom of the matter, for the young lady 'was seen A crying, & I fear by what I can understand that Mrs. Mary Verney may have too much kindness for M^rs^ Brumfield.'

Mary, who is quite capable of 'pretending an excuse' when it suits her, without the help of Sir Ralph or his agent, keeps her own counsel, but a little later she is much vexed that Sir Ralph will not allow her to bring Mrs. Bromfield to London as her attendant. She shall be provided with a maid, and Mrs. Verney must not be left without Kitty Bromfield's care; to which Molly replies promptly that her former maid Mrs. Norman is now out of place, and will take care of her mother, to their mutual satisfaction; and she thinks her grandfather cannot be 'unsenceable' that she would prefer a maid 'that is used to me, & knows all my ways then any stranger.' She writes respectfully, but very warmly on the
Jan. 19, 1691 subject, excusing her bad writing 'for they are at Cards about my ears being my birthday, that I can scarc tell what I writ,' a fact proved by her signing herself 'Yr most dutyfull and obedient Granfather to command, Mary Verney.'

After this her marriage becomes a pressing consideration, and as if hearts, like houses, could be let unfurnished, Sir Ralph is in treaty for her with Mr. Dormer, a family whose former relations with her father had never been friendly. Molly submits for a time, but with increasing distaste; she complains equally of Mr. Dormer's attentions, and of the lack of them. She had seen the ignominious downfall of passive obedience, the right of private judgment was in the air, and when authority wished to give her a lord and master she had grown to detest, she managed with skill and dexterity a revolution on her own account. Happily, the man to whom she gave herself away proved not unworthy, though he came by his authority in an unconstitutional manner.

Mary disappeared one summer's day from her uncle John's house, leaving a startling note behind her, 'Sir, I have bin for some time marryed to M^r^ Kelynge & upon his desires am now gone to live with him att his Mother's (in Fisher St. in Red Lyon Square), I hope you will excuse my not giveing you notice of this before as well as my abrupt leaving of your house, I was in fear of putting you in a passion the sight of which my temper cannot very well bare.' The secret had been kept a week. Mary writes more fully to her grandfather to forgive her for having 'marryed the only parson in the world I thought capable of making me happy.' He is her equal in every respect but 'in point of fortune,' and she is confident 'his personal merits will atone for that June 16, 1693

defect.' Her husband also writes a full account of himself, with many protestations of his devotion, and anxiously clears himself of any interested motives in his clandestine marriage with an heiress under age. Sir Ralph's indignation is not difficult to realise.

Lady Gardiner, who loved her dearly, writes to him of Molly's first reappearance in the family after her 'stolen maching.' 'Deare Brother, Isterday Mr. Keeling brought y^r^ grandaughter to mee, wch I confes was the sadest meeting I ever had with her, & maid my children stand like mutes being so full of grife. Bot I told my mind to him fust; & at last took corage to spake to her wch I find is highly afflicted for offending you & begs you will give her leve to beg her pardon on her knees of you for marying without yr consent;' but the little bride feels the joy of having jilted Mr. Dormer to be very supporting nevertheless.

June 20, 1693

Sir Ralph was not easily appeased. He had been kind and generous to his granddaughter, and could not understand how much courage the girl needed to be frank with him. Her uncle John interceded for her, and Rachel Lady Russell, now rapidly becoming 'stark blind,' longed to make peace for little Molly, when her friend, Lady Gardiner, told her all about it. The latter writes to Sir Ralph:

June 18, 1693

'My Lady Rossel told me isterday that my Lord Soffolks daughter was lately marryed much wors, for she has marryed A vally de shamber, so said, yr grandaughter had not dishonrd herselfe only brought

herself to live meanly, therefore hoped you wod pardon her, & not make it so great a Consarn to you as to predygiss yr helth & much more to this purpos. And I beg of you to take this advice from her as well as from mee, to make the best of what is past recovery, & wish I could heare shee had bin to beg yr pardon, who I dare say cannot think herselfe hapy till shee has it, but know her temper is so shy, as that shee never could speak her mind to you, wch has bin one of her great failings.'

Sir Ralph held out even against Lady Russell's advice, but he was pursued by affectionate letters from the culprits. If he had a cold, Mr. Keeling's servant appeared with letters of respectful inquiry; as soon as he was said to be better, they each wrote to congratulate him. The bride appealed to him 'to recall your wonted affection towards me, & S^r^ lett it not offend you that nothing but the want of your blessing can make me uneasie for otherwise I am perfectly happy.' Her husband was a gentleman by birth and breeding; he 'was the son of Sir John Kelyng Serg^t^ at Law,' and grandson of Sir John Keeling, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, who died in 1671. His sister Martha was the second wife of Sir John Osborne of Chicksands, Dorothy Osborne's brother; and Mary Keeling and her husband pay long visits to 'Brother & Sister Osborne' in the home so well known to us from Dorothy's letters. Another time John Keeling is carrying his wife down to Knebworth to his brother-in-law Sir Wm.

Lytton's, where they stay a fortnight, and Mary is
July 19, 1693 'very well and Merry,' she writes to Sir Ralph. 'I have been received with the greatest civility by all my husband's relations imaginable & he, except in fortune, hath all the good qualifications you could have wished for me in a husband to render me completely happy. . . . I cannot live in your displeasure & unless you design the breaking of my heart for an atonement I beg of you Sir no longer to defer your blessing.' John Keeling's 'endeavours for a reconciliation' continue to be 'restless in pursuit of it.' Sir Ralph yields at last, and Mary's short married life seems to have been very happy. They visit some of her old neighbours in 1695, Mrs. Duncombe at East Claydon and Mrs. Butterfield at the Rectory, travelling with a man and maid, 'on single horses.'

Feb. 10, 1696 Mary Keeling died in the spring of 1696, after giving birth to a daughter, also christened Mary, to whom Sir Ralph was godfather. For some weeks it seemed as if the baby would be spared, but 'Miss Keeling,' as the little mite is styled in the letters, died in May—the last of her race. Mary Verney, the widow, was in one of the long silent fits which often succeeded her hysterical attacks, when Cary Stewkeley told her of the death of 'Miss' as she always called her daughter. 'She said not a word, but her eyes filled with tears, & I think that she understood.' At times her mind seemed to wake up again; she would ask for needlework, and be very busy over it; she would send her love and duty

to Sir Ralph, and thanks for the improvements he had been making in her garden.

Mary Verney lived on till 1715, having survived all her descendants, and her faithful steward 'Anthony Dover, Batchelor,' whose whole life was devoted to her service. The poor people of the village, whom she loved, continued to cherish her memory. In the Parish books of East Claydon it is recorded that 20*s*. a year are given away 'on the 5th of June being the day of the death of Mrs. Mary Abell alias Verney, the Great Bell tolling whylst the money is distributing. . . . She was the Relict of Edmund Verney Esq^re^ . . . who for several years, XXX, was very Melancholy, during her husband's life . . . & continued soe 27 years after his decease, Lady of this Manor; and notwithstanding her lunacy shee was a Woman of Extraordinary Goodness, Piety & Devotion. She departed this life in the 74th year of her age.'

Her property, which had been the subject of so much scheming, reverted to the Abel family, but in 1726 William Abel sold it to Ralph Verney, 2nd Visc^t^ Fermanagh, for 25,800*l*.

In 1692 John Verney makes his family very happy by his second marriage with 'Mary, one of the daughters of the Hon^ble^ Sir Francis Lawley, Baronet, of St. Powell, Shropshire, Master of H. M. Jewel-office,' and of Anne Whitmore his wife. Mary was a tall, dignified woman, aged thirty-one, of a gracious presence, and the mode in which her

black hair towered above her forehead made her statelier still. John presents her with a breast jewel worth about 100*l.*: 'Diamonds are cheaper than they were a dozen years ago, I design to buy her another toy of £50 after marriage in what she likes best.' He gives her a set of 'Dressing table plate, & brushes & a looking glass; she said her Mother designed her such a thing but now she would have it in somewhat else. . . . I have put side glasses to my Coach, & taken off the redd Tassels from my harnesss & put on White ones & also white trappings on ye bridles & made new Liveries for my Serv^{ts}, the Arms I will alter shortly by putting her Coate with mine.' It is suggested that they should be married privately at the Abbey 'after Morning service on Sunday wch ends at 11 a'clock; her mother saith that as the Quire is the publickest so it is the privatest place; but as the Doores are all of open wainscote soe that people may look in at any time, & you know it is a thorowfare, I do not admire my Ly. Lawley's contrivance of privacy, but I said nothing.'

July 13, 1692

'As to my marriage,' he writes again to his father, 'Sunday being a Sacrament Day it seems it could not be at St. James', unless we could have come by 6 in the morn^{g}, for there being Prayers at 7, some are allways from that time in the Chappell, & therefore wee were marryed at West^{r} in Harry the 7th's Chap^{l} . . . my Wife desires her humble duty to you, if she were here she w^{d} write to you herself . . .

Mary Lawley
2nd Wife of John Verney
from a painting at Claydon House.

Mary Verney

for she is an Extraordinary sweet natured woman.' The letters of congratulation are pleasant reading. The bride's aunt, Lady Whitmore, is 'shure, if M. Verney be not happie in a Wife, I shall beleeve it his fault & so I shall tell him when I am Aquanted with him, as I now desire to be, he being yours;' her brother, Tom Lawley, writes to her with extreme affection; and the Palmers put sad memories aside, to give John's wife a kindly welcome.

Dame Penelope prides herself that she made 'the first motion of this marrig, I dare answer for the Bride y^t^ she will be very kind to the childering for that I have always told her.' 'Ye more I se y^r^ daughter so much ye more I like her,' Nancy writes to Sir Ralph, '& insted of my advising of her I thinke myself fitt to receve advis from her; w^n^ all y^e^ family did din w^th^ us & we again at Whit Hall we wanted nothing nor nobody but y^r^ self to complet y^e^ Weding solemnity, but we often drank y^r^ health & hartily wished you w^th^ us.' July 19, 1692

There is much interchange of hospitalities, and it is the wonder of both families how with so small a park Sir Ralph can furnish them all with so much venison.

John has a negro page, who waits upon his wife; he is described, when he is first brought to Middle Claydon, as 'a Moor of Guinea of about six years of age.' His baptism (October 6, 1689) is entered in the Parish Register; the little black boy's gossips were 'his Master M^r^ John Verney,' and the party

from the White House, 'Edmund and Molly Verney & Cary Stewkeley;' he was named Peregrine Tyam. He appears in the background of Mrs. John Verney's picture, and on September 14, 1707, there is an entry of his burial at Claydon. My Lady Latimer has 'a dwarf' in her household at this time; it was one of the fashions of the day that fair Englishwomen should be served by such uncouth pages.

Sept. 20, 1693 There is a bright little letter from Mrs. John Verney to Sir Ralph, thanking him for a happy visit with her husband and his children to Claydon; 'My father and mother send thare sarves, they have bin to give joy to Sir Marten Beckman y^{t} is new maried, he is 67 & his bride 60, this increases my feare of a mother in law, but nothing shall make me remane les then

'Yr ever Dutyfull & obedint Dau^{r} & sarvant,

'Mary Verney.'

She writes to John at Wasing that 'Bro. Palmer' has dined with her, 'Cousin Kellin & Cousen Denton' are with her; she nurses little Ralph very kindly in a fever, and wins all hearts in the family circle.

Oct. 1693 John's happiness seems complete when a son is born to them, to whom his grandfathers and Lady Whitmore stand sponsors, and then the child dies, and Mary falls a victim to smallpox when she is expecting for the second time to become a mother. Her husband sums up the story on her monument. 'She had one son named John who dyed within the year, and lyeth with her in the vault within the

Chancell [at Middle Claydon]. She departed this life on the 24th Aug. 1694 aged 33 years.'

John succeeded as second Baronet, and was raised to the peerage of Ireland in 1703 as Baron Verney of Belturbet and Viscount Fermanagh. His children by Elizabeth Palmer all lived to maturity. Ralph his heir was created Earl Verney in 1742, & married Catherine Paschall; his eldest son John married Mary Nicholson and died in his father's lifetime, leaving a posthumous daughter Mary; his second son Ralph succeeded as second Earl Verney, married Mary Herring, built the large rooms and the staircase at Claydon and died childless; his niece Mary succeeded him, was created Baroness Fermanagh, died unmarried and left her estates to her half sister, Catherine Nicholson, who took the name of Verney and bequeathed Claydon in 1827 to her cousin, Sir Harry Calvert, Bart., who in his turn assumed the old family name of Verney. John Verney's eldest daughter Elizabeth died unmarried, leaving a charitable endowment, still benefiting the Claydon villages under a new scheme. Mary married Col. John Lovett; her children died without issue. Margaret married Sir Thomas Cave; her great-granddaughter, Sarah Otway Cave, established her claim to the dormant Barony of Bray, which had passed to the Verneys by the marriage of Elizabeth Bray to Sir Ralph Verney in the time of Henry VIII. The present Lord Bray, fifth Baron, is therefore Sir Ralph Verney's lineal descendant.

It will be seen by this review of the family history, that Sir Ralph was paying the penalty of protracted life; he had outlived almost all his contemporaries. Two infirm widows, Cary Gardiner and Betty Adams, alone remained of the large circle of brothers and sisters except Tom, who could scarcely be said to belong to it. His old friends and correspondents, Dr. Denton and Sir Roger Burgoyne, Sir Nathaniel and Lady Hobart, Doll Leeke and Dame Vere Gawdy, had entered into rest. The Great Rebellion, the Restoration, the Revolution, in all of which he had played his part, had become matters of history. Having thrown himself with much zest into the work of the Convention Parliament, he expected to be re-elected for Buckingham in February 1690, but that inveterate schemer Sir Richard Temple had secretly taken measures to secure the two seats for himself and for Alexander Denton, whose share in the transaction was as little creditable. There was an outburst of indignation in the family, but Sir Ralph saved the situation by his magnanimity. With gentle dignity he reminded his godson and his old colleague that it was needless to intrigue against a man who had no private interests to serve, and was ready to retire whenever the borough found a worthier representative. He had the satisfaction of feeling that he had left Buckingham the better for his long political connection with it. He had, as Mr. Butterfield writes, ‘erected a lasting monument of his munificence’ in the town hall (often promised

by rival candidates, and forgotten when the elections were over), 'built about 1685 at the expense of Sir Ralph Verney.' The borough was in good humour, for the long vexed question of the locality of the Assizes had been settled in its favour. 'The Bailiffe & 2 Burgesses of Buckingham have been att London to give the Queene thankes for the Assizes, & have kist her Majestie's hand, & are come down with great joy beyond expression.' July 17, 1692

Sir Ralph keeps up his interest in public affairs, and rejoices at the victorious conclusion of King William's Irish campaigns. 'Such joy was never seen in town since K. Charles came in, for in all streets & alleys it was so light that you might have pickt up a pin in the streets, with bonfires & lights in rows in the windows as was set as thick as they could stand.' Sir Ralph finds ample occupation in his retirement, and is as hospitable as ever. 'No doubt but you are always full of companey,' writes a grateful relation. 'Who would not be glad to come to Middle Claydon when Sir Raph Verney is there? We would make the Kingdom happy if we could plant persons of y^{r} compassionate humor to help us poor mortals, y^{t} cannot help ourselves.' Oct. 15, 1691

Sir Ralph spent the spring of 1696 in town; he was racked with a cough, which the east winds increased even when he kept 'close at home,' and the 'dryed walnuts,' which he took medicinally, do not sound like a comforting remedy.

His lean figure was worn to a shadow, and he

suffered from many infirmities of old age without being mastered by them; the letters he dictated were clear and precise as of old; his head was as sound and his heart as kind as ever.

In the early summer Sir Ralph made the last of his many journeys from London to Claydon. It was an inclement season, 'the ordinary sort of people find it as cold as in winter,' yet the relations hear with horror that Sir Ralph has had made for himself 'a bathing tob.' He revives a little with the satisfaction of finding himself at home again, he gets into the Fir Tree Walk in the warmest hours of the day, and 'on all faire days he goes out in the Coach to take the aire.'

The faithful old sisters, who are in 'drooping spirits,' long to nurse him, but do not like to propose a visit unasked; Sir Ralph is never lonely at Claydon, he sees Coleman daily about the farms, and keeps up a brave show of transacting his ordinary business. It is suggested to him, however, that a favourite niece, Margaret Adams, has been ill, and would be benefited by country air; Sir Ralph gladly asks her to Claydon, and she never leaves him again. His other niece, Cary Stewkeley, is still living at the White House, having been asked by the Abells to continue her care of Mary Verney, and so the cousins meet daily.

The gentle maiden ladies, who had already reached middle life, were welcomed as young girls in so venerable a household, and got on admirably with

Elizabeth Baker
3rd Wife of Sir John Verney
from a painting at Claydon House.

E. Fermanagh

Sir Ralph and his old servants. They shared in Mrs. Lillie's disappointment when her master sent down her savoury meats untasted; they did their best to help the faithful Hodges when he strove to confine Sir Ralph within the paths of prudence, and kept John Verney constantly informed of his father's condition.

The twice widowed John, Sir Ralph's heir, was again courting a wife, Elizabeth Baker, the daughter of one of his rich City friends. Her good sense and sweet temper had made a pleasant impression on the older members of the family. Less well-born and well-bred than Mary Lawley, she had stronger health and she proved herself a good wife and kind stepmother in later years. John came down to Claydon at intervals with 'Little Master;' 'the sight of you & your child did much to revive Sir Ralph,' the cousins write, but John was busy with the settlements, meeting Alderman Baker, and attending upon 'the young gentlewoman,' who sent Sir Ralph her humble service. Sir Ralph, unselfish as ever, would not hear of John's leaving 'his mistresse till your occasions which I know are great be over.' He writes in much detail about his son's marriage, corresponds with John's little daughter Mary, and only makes the briefest allusions to his own failing health. Cary Gardiner recommends many herbs and drugs, and prescribes fomentations for his swollen leg, but Sir Ralph does not wish to be fussed over. When Peg Adams wants him to leave off his asses' milk, he only retorts upon

his nurse that she herself drinks much more whey than is good for her.

Betty Adams, old before her time, yet performs his commissions with alacrity. 'I am glad you lick your speting-pot,' she writes, 'it is the hansomest I could get. I shall obey your orders about the Hucaback.' Sir Ralph continues to send up his welcome hampers of Claydon delicacies, and desires the cloths to be returned to him. 'The pig was as good as one could eat,' writes the grateful Cary.

He still gets to church, though he feels 'as weak as a two year old child,' and on a Sunday in August
Aug. 11, 1696 he has to go out in the midst of Mr. Butterfield's sermon, forbidding the ladies to disturb themselves. When they rejoined him he was looking 'most lamentably,' and they persuaded him to be carried up to his room in a chair. 'Mrs. Lillie is extream carfull of him, and gets all those things for him, which he used to love and will take.'

Cary Stewkeley would often bring 'her night-clothes in her pockett,' when her cousin was more than usually anxious, but Sir Ralph never saw any reason for her to remain, and was afraid she might be censured for neglecting her proper charge.

So she returned that Sunday night with a heavy heart to East Claydon; but when she got back in the morning Sir Ralph had revived, and the next day was one to be long and lovingly remembered. Both ladies wrote a full account of it to John.

'Cousin Denton, Cousin Drake, Mun Woodward,

and one Mr. Lewsis' (Lucy?) had come over to inquire, and the hospitable old man was delighted to see them. Peg Adams persuaded him to stay upstairs, and the whole company assembled in his dressing-room. 'He dined at table with us,' Cary writes, 'and I thought for him he eat a very good dinner, and he spock as harty as he has done this twellmonth.' 'Dr. Blackmore desires him to forbear beer,' writes Peg, and the gentlemen came to her aid by assuring him 'that wine and water was propperer for him,' and 'very cheerfully he talked with them. He so often changes that I am unwilling to please myself too much with his amendment, he knows not of my writing, but told me last night that he would by no means have you come, until you had Leasure . . . with much adoe we have got him to have a little hartening broth made for him,' and he will sometimes take 'half his porringer full of jelly.' Sir Ralph has given Hodges some venison for his friends, which John is asked to send 'to Mr Lovet Linen Draper at the White Bear in Cornhill, a little beyond the Exchange;' he writes anxiously, 'Sir my Master I think growes weaker & weaker, & eates very little at dinner, hee keepes his chamber & lyes down on his bed a little after his diner, till about six that he rises to prayer, he gets little sleep in the night. I watched last night with him & I thought him fine & pert in the morning, but hee fell off again in the afternoone as hee doth most Daies.'

There is a break in the letters when John is at

Claydon; by the middle of September he is back in Hatton Gardens, and on the 20th Sir Ralph sends him up a hamper, and dictates an admirable business letter. He has sent to Mr. Busby about 'Son Keeling's bill in Chancery;' he acknowledges the return of 'the Cloth your pigg went in,' and concludes 'for my owne health, I still grow weaker, pray God bless you and yours.'

Sept. 20, 1696.

It was almost the last effort of the brave spirit and the failing body, 'he lyes in his bed all the morning, and upon it all the afternoon,' and 'dus not now rise from it at night to eat his supper nor say his prayers.'

Sir Richard Temple comes over to dine with his old House of Commons colleague, but finding Sir Ralph in bed, he goes on to London. Cary Gardiner prays for him many times a day on her knees, and her friend, the saintly Lady Russell, sends him an affectionate message that she makes it her daily petition that he may recover. But the prayers of devout women were no longer to keep the tired old man from his rest. On the morning of the 24th Cary Stewkeley found on her arrival that the master of the house knew not whether she went or stayed, so to her cousin's great relief she settled herself at Claydon House and took her share in watching by the bedside, and in writing the detailed accounts sent daily to John.

'He lays pretty quiet, but says nothing but rambling discours nor knows nobody now.' 'All

his servants are as diligent and careful as possible, two have watched with him every night.' 'Sometimes I think he may live 2 or 3 days then I think not so long, God knows all we have now to lose in him good man, I do so pray for his happy passage out of this world. I am in so great a consarn I can hardly tell what I say or do.'

Mr. Butterfield was sent for to recommend his soul to God.

There was a solemn pause of some hours, and then a horse was saddled in haste to carry letters to town. 'My dear Uncle, your good father,' Cary writes, 'dyed at 12 o'clock this night.' Both ladies address their letters to Sir John Verney, Baronet, and while praying that he may bear his loss with resignation, wish him joy in the same breath of his new estate and honours.

John sends down orders immediately to Coleman about 'the next duty and service that can be performed for my father, which is to have him laid where he commanded. . . . His body is to be embalmed. . . . I had thought to invite the neighbouring Gentry to the funerall which I computed to be about 40 or 50, but this afternoon meeting with some near relations and opening my Father's sealed-up will, wee find that he orders to be burried *as privately and with as little pomp as may be*, these are his very words,' and John 'not being able to find a medium (without giving offence) betwixt a private burriall and inviting all the neighbouring gentry,' Sept. 26, 1696

decides upon the former and desires his letter to be read out to the ladies and to Mrs. Lillie. 'Pray give my service to my kindred and to my friends,' he writes, 'and have a care of my Deare Father's body.' He desires that the Hall should be hung with black baize, 'the entry from the Hall door to the Spicery door, and the best Court Porch, likewise the Brick Parlour from top to bottom,' where a dozen chairs are to be covered with black and the three great tables.

John's decision was not approved of; Peg Adams expressed the general opinion of Claydon when she wrote, 'I should have thought that a man so generally known to be loved in the country, it would have been very decent to have some of the gentry carry him to his grave,' and Cary Gardiner in her bed 'told all the clocks from one to six' thinking over her nephew's interpretation of his father's will; 'to have no pomp,' she writes, 'may relate to straingers. . . . I confes on serious thoughts I think tis best to bury him publickly, without thos lengths as my brother may mean pomp.'

Her daughter Cary had remained on a few days at Claydon House, that she and her cousin might receive the Sacrament together, on that first Sunday when they had leisure to realise the greatness of their loss. She now wrote from East Claydon: 'Let me know when my deare Uncle is beried that I may steall out to waight on his body to the grave since it is so privat.' But all the relations acknowledged

that there was no want of affection on John's part, 'no child dus more lament for a father than he does,' and when 'he went out of town to attend his father to his grave with all the children,' Cary Gardiner had no other regret than that she was 'too infirm to pay him that last love and service, who loved him as the best of brothers ought to be loved . . . and that must shortly go to him that I beeleave a blest Saint in Heaven.'

It was a cold, wet autumn day when the family gathered round the vault in Middle Claydon Church; the neighbours, rich and poor, waited not for an invitation to show respect to their old friend. 'The rooms looked very handsomly, though the Heavens wept with all his relations at his funeral.' 'You had so much mob,' writes Nancy Nicholas, 'what would it have been had it been otherwais, [than private] Ye King was last Sunday at Whitehall Chapl, tis the first time since the Queen dyed, and I was told by one that was their he looked full of trouble and concern.' Oct. 13, 1696

'I thank God that we all got home without any accident,' writes Cary to John from East Claydon after the funeral, 'but all one side of me was as wet as if I had been abroad, for it was so dark we durst not put up the glass, and the wind and the rain did beat so in, and indeed I have taken a cold and have been ill ever since.' Oct. 12, 1696

* * * * * *

When, in after years, a master-hand drew the picture of an old English squire, the 'Coverley Papers' furnished 'so living a likeness of the man, and endeared him to their readers to such a point, that his death had at last to be announced with all the circumstances of an overpowering affliction. "I question not," says Addison, "but that my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it."'

After sharing the vicissitudes of Sir Ralph's long life, in the 'Verney Letters,' it is impossible to stand by his grave without a kindred feeling of regret. Two hundred years have elapsed since that stormy October day when he was laid to rest, but Claydon still has kept his memory green, and we would part from him with some comfortable words, written while Sir Ralph Verney was yet a boy:

'But above all, beleeve it, the sweetest Canticle is, Nunc dimittis, when a Man hath obtained worthy Ends. . . . Death has this also, That it openeth the Gate to good Fame.'

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